mation had been derived from recent visits to their haunts in Shelburne and Queens.—There are ninety-one millions of rats and mice in England; they consume as much grain as would supply three millions of people daily with a two pound loaf each all the year round.—Minks promise to be scarce this winter, musk-rats are plentiful, foxes and wild cats are increasing, and Halifax county is becoming a perfect bear garden.—The Cattle disease has nearly died out in England.—A substance resembling artificial Tannin has been prepared from bituminous coal and anthracite by the action of nitric acid.—In England the present price of wool is from 34 to 45 cents per pound, and the demand is increasing.—Rat and mole catching was practised as a trade in England in the thirteenth century.—A French chemist has analized the milk of the cat, and finds it very rich in albuminoid (cheese) substance. He may likewise calculate how large a herd of cats will be required to furnish a three-ton cheese such as the Canadian one now on its way to Paris.—Principal Dawson is desirous of obtaining information from Nova Scotians for his new edition of Acadian Geology.—There is a cross between the hare and the rabbit carried out on a large scale in the vicinity of Angoulême, but the owner will only sell his productions in the dead state to hinder discovery of the process employed.—Boussingault has at last proved, by careful experiments, that the under surface of the leaf decomposes more carbonic acid than the upper surface; in some instances the amount being nearly four times as much.—In the Bonn University, the ground floor of the Chemical Laboratory now in course of erection contains 44 rooms, exclusive of vestibule, corridors and closets.—The articles now being collected for the Paris Exhibition are to be shown in January in the Mason Hall for a small admission fee.—The greatest want of our Halifax gardens is in the way of spring flowering bulbs, such as narcissi, crocuses and snow-drops, which give such a charm to English gardens.—Dr. Hassal has obtained a pension from the Civil List for his services in hunting up the adulterations of foods and drinks.—An English nobleman having been treated externally by belladonna by his physician was suddenly seized with cerebral excitement, and the physician found him next day in the hands of a solicitor, three keepers and a mad doctor; beware of belladonna.—The weekly analyses of the water of the different Water Companies in London show the marvellous effects of animal charcoal in removing organic as well as mineral impurities. Formerly there was "meat and drink and physic too in plain cold water;" now it is thin and tasteless.—Dry earth closets in houses are coming into extensive use in lieu of water closets. *Dry* earth has a remarkable power of absorption of offensive matter, and these are economised by the process for agricultural purposes.—As formerly, we expect this month from the Secretary of every Agricultural Society in the Province a concise statement of the crops in his district during the past season, noticing quantity of yield and quality, injuries sustained, &c. All communications of this nature, whether from the officers of Agricultural Societies or others, will be thankfully received, and duly acknowledged in the synopsis of the season's crops to be hereafter published.

EDINBURGH BOTANICAL SOCIETY.

The thirty-first session of this Society was opened on 8th November, when Prof. Balfour, the chairman, made some opening remarks, in which he referred to the death of Dr. Greville, the late president; of Dr. W. H. Harvey, Professor of Botany, Trinity College, Dublin, an honorary fellow of the society, who died on 15th May, 1866, at the age of 55; of Jean Francois Camille Montagne, one of the foreign honorary fellows of the society, a distinguished cryptogamic botanist, who died on 9th January, 1866, at the age of 82; and of Diedrich Friedrich Ludovic Von Schlechtendal, Professor of Botany and Director of the Botanic Garden at Halle, another foreign honorary fellow, who died on 12th October, 1866. It was stated that the following were the number of members on the roll of the society:—Royal personages, 2; honorary fellows, (British), 5; honorary fellows, (foreign), 23; resident fellows, 91; non-resident fellows, 268; foreign and corresponding members, 96; associates, 25; ladies, 11—total, 524. The chairman congratulated the members on the continued prosperity of the society, and alluded to the valuable papers which had been read during the last session, and which are printed in the "Transactions."

ON THE PLANTS OF OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.

Of tree ferns, 6·81 per cent. of Otago ferns are arborescent. These tree ferns rank, as regards beauty, and frequently as regards height, girth and usefulness, with the exogenous forest trees with which they are generally more or less intermixed. Cyathea Smithii is the most common species in Otago. Dicksonia squarrosa and D. antarctica are also marked tree ferns of the district. In the south island of New Zealand tree ferns are associated with glaciers, snow, and other evidences of an alpine and rigorous climate. There are also found bordering on glaciers, fuchsia trees and cabbage palms, associated with Araliaceæ, Myrtaceæ, and other trees usually regarded as denizens of comparatively warm climates. The largest glacier, Mount Cook, (13,000 feet, in lat. 43½ deg.) which gives rise to the Waivan river, descends as low as 500 feet above the sea level on the west coast of Canterbury, and within eight miles frem the sea. On both sides of this glacier luxuriant forests of tree ferns, Cordylines, Myrtaceæ, and other temperate and sub-tropical types are found. At no great distance from these glaciers are found true palms (Areca sapida). In the mountainous forests and ravines of Nelson, tree ferns ascend to 2000 feet. The acclimatisation of New Zealand ferns in Britain has been lately attracting the attention of horticulturists. Dr. Lindsay, however, doubts whether these plants will be hardy enough to stand the severest British winters without protection. The classification and nomenclature of New Zealand ferns furnish us with some notable instances of the proneness to error in reference to climate, and the definition of genera, species, and varieties. Dr. Lindsay states that thirty species have been made out of Ophioglossum vulgatum, twenty different names are given to Pteris aquilina (the common bracken), and about a dozen species have been manufactured out of Lycopodium clavatum. The variability of the species of New Zealand ferns is remarkable.—*Dr. Lindsay, in Bot. Society's Proceedings.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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