

always had the interests of the Society at heart. It was a cause of great regret by the Society that he had left them, but they could tender him their hearty thanks and wish him every success in his new sphere.

The report and balance-sheet were passed.

2. The following Office-bearers were then elected for the current year:—*President*—W. M. Maskell, F.R.M.S.; *Vice-presidents*—Hon. G. R. Johnson and Mr. A. de B. Brandon; *Council*—Sir James Hector, Dr. Newman, Messrs. Hulke, Govett, Travers, M'Kay, and Tregear; *Secretary and Treasurer*—R. B. Gore; *Auditor*—W. E. Vaux.

GENERAL MEETING.

Papers.—1. "Some Moot Points in Mental Science," by W. W. Carlile, M.A.

ABSTRACT.

In a recent paper the writer had alluded to Professor Huxley's theory of the mental process of abstraction—viz., that it was analogous to the physical process of taking compound photographs; that, accordingly, the vague representations of men, hills, and rivers in dreams might rightly be described as *generic*—and had maintained that this theory could not stand, because a general conception must cover contradictories, and contradictories could not be represented in one image. The question had been threshed out 200 years ago. Locke had alluded to the general idea of a triangle as one that "must neither be oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once." On this Bishop Berkeley had taken him to task in his gravely sarcastic fashion, observing that if any one could frame such an idea as this of a triangle "he would be sorry to dispute him out of it." The difficulty had not escaped Kant. Its solution, indeed, formed an important feature in his Philosophy. "No image," he observes, "could ever be adequate to our conception of a triangle in general." He was of opinion, therefore, that not images, but what he calls *schemata*, lie at the foundation of general conceptions. The schema is a sort of mental rule for the construction of a triangle, and is a product of thought as distinguished from reproductive imagination simply. The distinction was all-important. The two faculties were often in inverse proportion to one another. This radical error was the source of further error, in connection with the doctrines of necessary truth and causation. In Professor Huxley's view, the reminiscence "I was in pain yesterday," might "properly be said to be necessary." If that was so, the distinction between necessary certainty and ordinary certainty was wholly illusory; and, in that case, nearly all that had been called philosophy, from Plato to Hume, was idle words. The truth, however, was far otherwise. After some further argument and illustration, intended to bring out the writer's view of the character of necessary truth, he went on to say that Professor Huxley divided so-called necessary truths into two classes—(1) Identical propositions; (2) Truths of experience. Identical propositions, such as "A is A," depended on the possibility of intelligible speech. This took it for granted that it was the easiest thing in the world to say what was an identical proposition, and what was not. If we thought it out, however, it did not seem to be so. "Black is black" is an identical proposition, no doubt. What about "Black and white in alternate patches are piebald"? That was also, perhaps, identical. What about "Blue and yellow mixed are green"? That was certainly not identical, yet it stood on a different footing from a mere truth of experience, as we could see the blue and yellow in the green—that is, the whole cause in the effect. This seemed to him to make very clear the inadequacy of the famous Humist

doctrine of causation, that "difference" and "constant conjunction" between two phenomena "are all the circumstances that enter into the idea of cause and effect." The truth rather was that we never wholly understood the causal connection between two phenomena till we perceived the identity between the cause and the effect. In illustration of this he cited a passage from Spinoza on the efficient cause of a circle.

2. "On the Occurrence of *Morchella esculenta*," by T. Kirk, F.L.S.

ABSTRACT.

This paper recorded what the author believed to be the first discovery in New Zealand of the true *Morchella esculenta*, a valuable edible fungus. The specimens described were collected near Otaki by Mr. C. W. Lee; but it is decidedly rare. The author mentioned that the reported occurrence of this fungus in Canterbury by Mr. Armstrong is evidently a mistake, the specimen from that district being *M. cornica*.

Mr. Travers said he had found this fungus in New Zealand some eight years ago. It commands a high price in Paris, and if it could be procured in quantity would prove a valuable source of revenue.

Sir J. Hector believed that it had been found in the Upper Hutt District.

3. "On the Hessian Fly," by W. M. Maskell, F.R.M.S.

ABSTRACT.

The identification of the wheat fly sent down from the Rangitikei District with the true Hessian fly (*Cecidomyia destructor*) is a matter of some importance. The larva, or maggot, answers entirely to that of *C. destructor*, possessing the peculiar appendage beneath the head, called the breast-bone, characteristic of the Hessian fly. The author had, at first, some doubt as to the veining of the wings, but has since been able to satisfy himself that the real Hessian fly has reached these islands. The Hessian fly is, however, subject to much damage from the attacks of other insects—parasites as they are called. The author reported that in New Zealand it had no sooner arrived than it was attacked by parasites in the form of hymenopterous insects, probably of the family *Proctotrupidæ*, and indigenous to New Zealand.

Exhibits.—A specimen of the "bladder fluke" obtained from a rabbit captured at Dry River, Wairarapa, by Mr. Coleman Phillips, was exhibited by Sir James Hector.

The speaker said that this was one stage of the tapeworm of the fox, wolf, etc., and probably of the wild dog and cat. He further stated that in America he had seen large tracts of country cleared of rabbits in a few months by the propagation of this disease. This is the third time the disease has appeared in the Wairarapa; but the difficulty in this country will probably be to secure a proper host, as otherwise the worm cannot reach maturity, and the disease will die out.