

address on the work and results of the past year, which appeared in last month's journal.

Baron F. von Mueller, in moving a vote of thanks to the president for his address, referred to the intimate relations of natural science to agriculture and kindred pursuits, and, in speaking of the rust fungus in wheat, said that, when lecturing in Sandhurst in 1865, he had stated that wheat crops near the coast, or on somewhat saline soils, were not nearly so liable to the attacks of rust as those in apparently more suitable positions, and his remarks had since proved to be to a great extent correct.

The evening was set apart for exhibits of birds'-eggs and insects, and the following were the principal exhibits:—By Mr. F. G. A. Barnard.—A case of the more uncommon Victorian insects of different orders, mostly from neighbourhood of Melbourne. By Mr. D. Best.—Three cases of beetles, principally Victorian. By Mr. C. French, F.L.S.—Case of Lepidoptera from Central America; case of Australian and other beetles (Buprestidæ). By Mr. C. French, jun.—Case of rare eggs of Victorian birds; eggs of New Guinea and Australian Cassowaries. By Mr. E. E. Johnson.—60 species of Victorian birds'-eggs, including that of the Gang Gang Cockatoo, exhibited for first time. By Mr. G. A. Kearnland.—About 200 kinds of Victorian birds'-eggs, including 40 rare ones. By Mr. G. Lyell, jun.—Butterflies from Tamworth, N.S.W. By Mr. J. Searle.—Butterfly, *Papilio erectheus*, from Wangaratta, Victoria.

After the usual *conversazione* the meeting terminated.

THE CLUB EXCURSION TO OAKLEIGH.

THE ordinary monthly excursion of the Field Naturalists' Club took place on Saturday, 19th April, under the leadership of Mr. Ch. French, F.L.S. The members mustered in fair force, and the number was considerably increased by several of the students from the College of Pharmacy, under their instructor, Mr. D. M'Alpine, Lecturer on Biology at Ormond College, taking part in the proceedings.

The season being far advanced, the time (2 p.m.) seemed much too late for a start, the spot chosen being around Oakleigh, on the main Gippsland railway line, and $9\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Melbourne. Arriving at Oakleigh, a start was made in a direction of about S.E. The day was warm and very pleasant for travelling, and this locality having quite an evil reputation as being infested with snakes, a sharp look-out was kept, as few, if any, of the party wore leggings; the lateness of the season, it was thought, rendered matters in this line comparatively safe. The party (16 in all) now spread themselves out, so that as much ground as possible might be traversed in the limited time at their disposal.

Passing through low-lying land on which grew large quantities of *Selaginella uliginosa*, *Lobelia anceps*, *Haloragis*, &c., &c., we crossed a small rise, on the left side of which is a fence and some traces of former civilization, before the land boom atrocities set in. The advance party were some distance already when a coo-ee from those in the rear announced the capture of a snake, which, although not killed by one of the party (some of whom had begged the specimen from a man who had just despatched it), furnished some very interesting particulars, ascertained by Mr. M'Alpine, who informs me that the heart continued beating for $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours after the vertebræ had been severed. Flukes were also found in its gullet, windpipe, and stomach, of a still undetermined species. A nematode worm, 6 inches in length, was found in the stomach, and is now being determined and described by Dr. Cobb, of Sydney. Not a bad afternoon's work, after all, I think you will say.

Steering in the direction of Mordialloc, we came across scrubby rises, covered with various Epacrids, Acacias, &c. *Eriochilus autumnalis* was, up till the present time, the only orchid seen in bloom, although we presently found a solitary specimen of *Pterostylis aphylla*, a species not uncommon in the Brighton district. About a mile from the Oakleigh station there occurs a thick belt of Tea-tree—*Melaleuca squarrosa*—some plants of which attain quite a respectable height, although, in these districts it usually is little else but a shrub. Plants in bloom were scarce, the season being both too late and too early for them; the principal ones noticed as being in flower were *Styphelia scoparia* (better known to you, perhaps, as *Monotoca scoparia*), *Styphelia humifusa* (the pretty little native cranberry), *Acacia oxycearum* (just budding), *Hakea*, *Melaleuca*, *Wahlenbergia*, *Cassutha*, *Loranthus*, one or two species of Eucalypts; and the always welcome little Native Daisy, *Brachycome graminifolia*, grew here, there, and everywhere. The *Melaleuca* scrub about here was very dense, and just inside a wire fence grew a number of stunted Eucalypts—*E. viminalis*, *E. pauciflora*, and a dwarf kind of stringybark, possibly *E. obliqua* (?). In the middle of this group was found a solitary specimen of *Acacia linearis*, a species not often occurring so far away from the mountains. The specimen is about 20 ft. high. Steering about due west we came across a scrubby hill, on which some family had commenced to cultivate. We did not envy them their prospect, as the land here is poor in the extreme. Near this humble little homestead, were found some old posts lying upon the ground, relics evidently of some early days post-and-rail fencing. One of the party, whose forte is botany and entomology, with a pretty keen eye for whatever may turn up in the natural history line, essayed to lift one of these posts for the purpose of hunting for beetles and like

game, when, to his great astonishment, his hand was within a few inches of a small Copperhead Snake, who had taken up his quarters under the post. To pin the head of the snake to the ground by means of an umbrella, was the work of a moment, although, the ground being of soft sand, the "job" had to be performed carefully, as the snake, although only about 2 ft. in length, was evidently not in a particularly amiable mood; and as Mr. M'Alpine was anxious of securing the specimen alive, the snake was seized by the nape of the neck (after the method adopted by Mr. Le Souef), and safely bagged alive for future observation.

It may be mentioned that both snakes taken were known as the Copperheads (*Hoplocephalus superbis*). It was near to this spot that one of the party (a student from the Pharmacy College) discovered a very singular plant, which the Baron von Mueller says is a monstrous growth of some species of orchid, but as yet he (the Baron) has not been able to satisfy himself of its exact specific position, and would be glad to receive further specimens for scientific examination.

There were a few birds in the neighbourhood such as the Harmonious Thrush, Wattle Bird, Brown Hawk, Magpie, Robin, &c. ; but our sportsman, not being a Cockney one, had no desire to shoot all and sundry, so merely contents himself with shooting a few of the smaller birds for his collection.

Insects were of course scarce, and with the exception of a few Trox, Staphylinidæ, Carabs, a spider or two, including the Victorian Katipo (*Lathodectus scelio*), and one or two kinds of Hesperidæ and small moths, very few were seen, the reason being, as in the case of plants—that it was too early for insect life.

The very curious fern, *Schizæa bifida*, is common here, and several specimens were collected.

With the collecting done, the exchange of ideas, and the "bush lectures" in the field, a very pleasant, and we hope instructive, afternoon was spent. Melbourne was reached shortly after dark.

THE RESERVATION OF WILSON'S PROMONTORY.

THE proposal that Wilson's Promontory should be reserved as a site for a national park for Victoria, principally with the view of preserving the native fauna and flora, was first made by Mr. J. B. Gregory, LL.M., at a meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, and by Mr. A. H. S. Lucas before the Royal Society, some two years ago; and the project being supported by the Royal Society, the Geographical Society, and the Artists' Society, a joint deputation from the different societies waited on the Minister of Lands and urged the adoption of their scheme.



French, Charles. 1890. "The Club excursion to Oakleigh." *The Victorian Naturalist* 7, 14–16.

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