

**OTANIC AND HORTICUL-
COMPANY.**

MEETING.

meeting of the Royal Belfast Horticultural Company (limited) was held on the 27th inst. at the premises of A. J. Macrory, Esq., in the presence of—Rev. William MacLewine, Professor Stovelly, Messrs. Thomas Ferguson, Thomas Thomson, Thomas Gaffikin, Messrs. A. F. Herdman, Thomas Blair, H. H. Bottomley, Frederick Philip Richardson, James Carson, William Simms, W. Jackson, &c.

The Secretary, having read the advertisement, read the following report:

SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT.

The shareholders their sixth annual meeting, were glad to state that the finances were in a better condition than when the company, which at the commencement was £672 (in addition to the £1000), have been reduced to £442. The directors regret to state, still presses on, and prevents many improvements, which would greatly improve the gardens, and increase their value.

The directors to press on the attention of the shareholders for a further addition to the funds. The total number of subscribers, notwithstanding the great increase in buildings and inhabitants in the county, while that for the previous year, the receipts from subscribers to the company was £255 8s 4d, the average price was 10s. This increase of 46 per cent. is the indefatigable energy of Mr. Smyth. Still it is much needed from a town of such ex-

... however, to remind the shareholders, while the increase in wages and other articles of consumption the expenditure during the past year proportionately increased, and with the gardens can be maintained in a better manner, and the necessary im-

tial investment in property which was as much their own as any property could be called.

Several suggestions were made as to making the gardens more attractive to the public, and thereby increasing the revenue, but no resolution was proposed.

Dr. Thomson moved a cordial vote of thanks to the millowners principally, who had so liberally contributed to their funds during the past year, and enabled the committee to provide for the recreation of the working classes. He believed that, notwithstanding the large number of people who had visited the gardens on Saturday afternoons during the summer, no mischief had been done.

THE CURATOR—None.
Rev. WILLIAM MACLEWINE seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

On the motion of the Rev. WILLIAM BRUCE, a vote of thanks was passed to Dr. WYVILLE THOMSON and the other gentlemen associated, for the interest they had taken in the raising of this additional means of income.

Five directors having been appointed in the rooms of these retiring by rotation, Mr. SAMUEL VANCE was appointed auditor, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN WHIG.

SIR,—I must trespass on your valuable space with a few lines of reply to Mr. Ard. Mr. Ard chose to misadvert on my speech on National Education, impeaching my statistics, denying that the system was one of mixed education, and winding up with the charitable, and, of course, very true assertion, that the Presbyterians shut their Bible, and had agreed with the Catholics that the Bible was not a fit book for instruction, and that at least during school hours it should be locked up in a chest, &c., &c. In his second letter he tries to raise a number of new issues. Some of these, he may find, he had better have let alone.

He thinks he meets my facts about the number of National Schools by telling me that Ireland is not yet an educated country. Has he yet to learn the difference between a country that is in process of education, after ages of shameful neglect, and a country that is in a highly educated condition? It is lamentably true that in Ireland, according to the last Census, there are a large number of uneducated persons, but not, as Mr.

THE CONTINUITY OF CREATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN WHIG.

SIR,—I regret that it was impossible for me to be present at the Rev. Mr. MacLewine's lecture on "The Continuity of Creation," reported in your paper of last Saturday (25th January), especially as it was in reply to my opening address to the Belfast Natural History Society, which you did me the honour of reporting at length in your paper of the 19th November.

A newspaper is not the place to discuss difficult scientific questions, and I do not intend to enter on the merits of the question between us; but I wish in your columns to assert that I cannot with accuracy be called a disciple of Darwin.

I agree with Darwin—first, that life is something quite distinct from the ordinary properties of matter, and did not at the first originate in them, but in creative power; and, second, that all existing living forms are descended from one or a few unorganised or lowly-organised ancestors.

But neither of these is the characteristic point of Darwin's theory. The derivation of all forms by descent from a few originals was maintained by Lamarck more than sixty years ago. The original part of Darwin's theory refers to the manner in which the derivation has been brought about. He accounted for it by "natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life," and I do not say that he denies, but he leaves out of account, any reference to Divine wisdom in originating the many beautiful adaptations of nature, as that of the eye to light. Now, the only original point I made in my address was an Aristotelian (or rather algebraic) demonstration, or attempted demonstration, of the utter insufficiency of such a theory to account for any complex adaptation, like those of the eye, and, consequently, its failure as a complete theory of the origin of species. And I ended by stating my agreement, from purely scientific reasoning, with the general belief of mankind, that such adaptations are to be directly referred to creative wisdom.

I wish to set myself right on another point. I stated that Darwin had overlooked the importance of the facts that changes in the conditions of life and mixture of races tend to promote variability. I was under a mistake here: Darwin fully admits their importance.

I should have written sooner, but I waited till I could have some conversation with Mr. MacLewine.—Yours truly,
JOSEPH JOHN MURPHY.

Old Forge, Dunsurry, Feb. 1, 1867.