

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.

(SESSION 1896-97.)

November 5th, 1896.

Dr. ALBERT GÜNTHER, F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Messrs. Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, C.B., and William Tyson were elected, and Messrs. Vernon H. Blackman and Percy Groom were admitted Fellows of the Society.

Dr. Morris, C.M.G., exhibited specimens and slides illustrating the occurrence of raphides in the bulbs of the common Hyacinth of gardens (*Hyacinthus orientalis* and varieties). Forms of eczema were said to have been produced in persons handling and cleaning these bulbs. Although the fact was familiar to gardeners, the cause did not appear to have been clearly traced. Experiments and observations at the Jodrell Laboratory at Kew had shown that both dry and moist scales were capable of producing considerable irritation in certain cases when applied directly to the skin. There was little doubt that the raphides were the prime agents. These needle-shaped crystals (composed of oxalate of lime) varied from $\frac{1}{100}$ th to $\frac{1}{200}$ th of an inch in length, and were arranged in close bundles, easily dispersed by rubbing the dry scales. In the growing plants they were doubtless protective, as snails, for instance, avoided hyacinth bulbs but attacked others growing close by. Roman hyacinths (var. *albulus*) were understood to cause greater irritation than other varieties.

Dr. D. H. Scott described some experiments which he had tried, tending to confirm the conclusion that the irritation of the