

ON A PROBABLY NEW SPECIES OF LAMPREY
FOUND IN TASMANIA.

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Tasmania, &c., &c., &c.

THE singular fish I have the honor to lay before this monthly meeting of the Society, was transmitted to me by the Rev. E. C. Marum, of Jerusalem, with the request that I would present it to the Museum, if worthy of acceptance. It was caught by Mr. John Ibbott, near Stockdale, six miles south of Jerusalem, whilst netting for rock-roach, in the Coal River. This part of the river is entirely fresh water; and far above tidal influence. When removed from the net it was living, and firmly adhering by its sucker-like mouth to a rock-roach fish. "When placed in a dish of water," says the Rev. Mr. Marum, "he at once adjusted his pouch charmingly, reminding me of the days when I used a set of bladders in learning to swim; he seemed to sink and rise then as a boat or ship does when at anchor as the waves or ripples move them."

I submitted this fish to the inspection of the members present at the last meeting of the Physical Section of the Society, and it was thought advisable to refer its further examination, and the discussion of its peculiarities, to this monthly meeting of all the Fellows.

In comparing it with one of the specimens of a marine-lamprey caught in the Tasmanian seas, it is apparent that, in comparison to length, it is much thicker and has a larger head. The special distinctions, however, are the large pouch it has beneath the gill openings, and the two ridges on its back, near the caudal extremity. In none of the descriptions of lampreys, either fresh-water or marine, that I have read is there any account of the singular and very capacious bag beneath the gill openings that I have alluded to. The Rev. Mr. Marum would seem to infer that it is of the nature of an air-bladder or float, but if so it is of very unusual thickness. At first we were inclined to consider this curious appendage as an abnormal growth, and not a natural portion of the Coal River lamprey. But I find that all caught there have been similarly characterised. One was caught last week, several at different times before in the previous five years. I have deferred opening this pouch and examining its anatomical structures until this meeting. As far as my scanty knowledge of the natural history of fishes enables me to judge, I believe

this specimen to be a new and hitherto undescribed species of fresh-water lamprey. I am promised the next specimen caught, and I shall transmit to my old fellow-student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in London,—Professor Owen, now of the British Museum—as I am sure I could not submit it to an authority higher in general estimation than this world-famed naturalist.