STUDIES IN TASMANIAN MAMMALS, LIVING AND EXTINCT.

Number XI.

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NOTES ON A MUTILATED FEMUR OF *NOTOTHERIUM*.

(Read 6th August, 1923.)

Among some recently acquired fragments of *Nototherium* bones presented to the Tasmanian Museum by Mr. Burnley, of Mella, near Smithton, and therefore in the locality of the Mowbray Swamp, is the shaft of a femur, obviously that of a Nototherian calf. The bone lacks the head and major trochanter at its proximal end, and distally both the condyles are missing, yet in spite of the several mutilations, the specimen is of especial interest.

It is the thigh bone of an animal that has apparently been hunted, and gripped by a carnivorous animal. Both edges of the bone have suffered, thus suggesting a double attempt at dragging the creature down, one of which was made upon the outer side and a second from between the legs. Two foes falling at a time upon a calf would equally well account for the facts, and if the Carnivores of Pleistocene Australia hunted in packs, this latter is the more likely of the two possibilities.

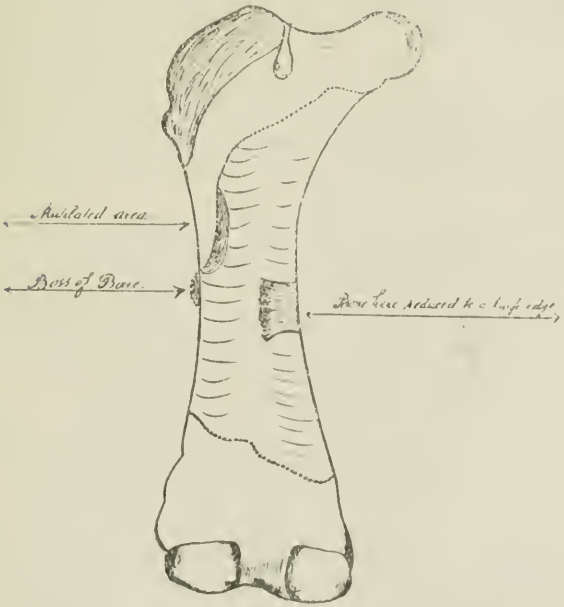
As a second femoral shaft of similar size, and apparently the associate of the mutilated bone, is also present, a very exact comparison of the two is open to us. The wounded animal having escaped its foes, carried to the day of its death the marks of the encounter, in the shape of two contracted bony areas, in which absorption in one instance has reduced one edge to 1 mm. in thickness from a normal of 30 mm.

Externally, the shaft has undergone a series of alterations, resulting in the formation of a groove about 100 mm long, with a thickened boundary edge that in one case at least formed a long boss that has extended beyond the normal outline of the diaphysis.

The diaphysis itself, upon all its faces, has been thrown into a series of transverse hollows and ridges—suggesting a contraction of the periosteal membrane and a later bony secretion that followed the contour of the several corrugations.

The whole character of the double wound upon the inner and outer edges of this Nototherian femur leads to the conviction that a carnivorous animal had at one time attempted the life of its owner. A strong kick would not have produced such results, whilst the imprisonment of the leg in a cleft among rocks or an accidental slip into a hole would have affected more directly the themal and anconal aspects of the shaft.

We are of the opinion that the mutilations were caused by one of the larger marsupial Carnivores, and look to the future for obtaining material proofs of the former existence of *Thylacoleo* and associated animals in the Pleistocene formations of Tasmania.



Text fig.—Approximately one quarter of natural size.