

NOTES ON THE EGG OF THE *ECHIDNA SETOSA*.

BY ALEXANDER MORTON.

(Plate XLV.)

For many years past, and even to the present time, grave doubts have existed in the minds of many as to the mode of breeding in connection with the Platypus and the Echidna. To the scientific world Mr. Caldwell, in 1883, set at rest any doubt as to the question whether this peculiar order of animals was viviparous or oviviparous, by securing a large number of specimens of the Echidna and the Platypus in various stages of development. It is not recorded, however, that the egg of the Echidna had ever been found in Tasmania, and, therefore the specimen I have much pleasure in submitting to the Fellows this evening will doubtless be of great interest. This important discovery was made known to me by Mr. Fletcher, residing in the Campbell Town district, who stated that while riding in that district his horse put his foot into a small hole; on placing his hand in the hole he found an Echidna had burrowed some eighteen inches or two feet in the soft soil, on lifting the animal out a small white egg fell to the ground, the fall broke the egg and revealed a small foetus of the Echidna. Mr. Fletcher carefully secured the broken shell and the foetus, kindly presenting both specimens to the museum. The egg is about three-quarters of an inch in length. I am indebted to Mr. R. A. Bastow, F.L.S. for the sketch taken shortly after arrival at the museum. Plate XLV, Fig. 1, natural size of the animal; Fig. 2, egg shell; Figs. 3, 4, enlarged size of the animal; Fig. 5. ditto of egg case.

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