

STUDIES IN TASMANIAN MAMMALS, LIVING AND
EXTINCT.

No. VI.

CETACEAN REMAINS FROM THE FOSSIL BEDS AT
WYNYARD.

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We desire to place on record a few notes relating to the discovery of certain Cetacean remains from the assumed Miocene beds at the Wynyard Cliffs, North-West Tasmania.

Our latest additions consist of parts of the embedded centra and processes of some twenty vertebræ, which in superficial osteology agree fairly closely with those of the modern *Globicephalus* whales, and depart, as equally, from such *Squalodont* remains as we have handled from this locality.

Early in the year 1914 Messrs. E. D. and R. N. Atkinson presented to the Launceston Museum a small slab of rock, much infiltrated with silicon, containing a fossil that was determined as the supra-orbital portion of a Delphinoid skull that had been stripped of its overlying maxillary wing, prior to its inclusion in the matrix. The donors, upon extended research, were able to unearth, at some distance from the first discovery, a piece of fossil bone that presented every appearance of being the missing maxillary wing, it having evidently been swept hither and thither upon the old Miocene beach until it eventually found a resting place.

These remains were plotted out in terms of modern Cetaceans and were found to agree in several points with

the Round Headed Dolphin, and in this connection the agreements noted were as follows:—

- (1) The frontal bone was excavated for the reception of the coronoid process of the mandible. This character is retained in *Globicephalus* but not in *Delphinus* or *Tursiops* to any extent.
- (2) The single vertebra and scrap of the mandible found with this skull also agree with *Globicephalus* as far as they were available for comparison, but their fragmentary nature made a close study quite impossible.
- (3) Upon the assumption that the rest of the skull indicated parts of the frontal bone curving upwards to form the fronto-occipital ridge and a moiety of the posterior upper wall of the temporal fossa, with a forward extension to the maxillary region, the whole of the find was accounted for.

The recent acquisition by the Tasmanian Museum of some twenty vertebral remains, previously mentioned, seems to confirm the idea of these being related to a whale of *Globicephalus* class, and we provisionally record them as such.

At a future date we hope to give extended details, together with illustrations of the two discoveries. This paper must therefore be regarded as a preliminary recording note only. It is most unfortunate that both of the Atkinsons, father and son, have passed away without leaving any exact data as to the spots from which the fossils were obtained. The recently instituted Government protection of these fossil cliffs should prevent such situations arising in the future.