

The following paper was read:—

“The Connection of Swifts with Weather,” by Stuart Dove, F.Z.S. The writer detailed a number of observations which tended to show that the swifts appeared immediately before atmospheric disturbances. Ants in the winged state formed a large part of the food of the swift in this country, and the writer had noticed that the winged ants issued from their nests more particularly during the damp and close weather which precedes weather changes. It had occurred to him that the frequent appearance of the swifts shortly before or after atmospheric disturbances might be due to their winged food occurring more plentifully at those times.

Mr. T. Stephens exhibited a piece of bone which had been found by his son when engaged in laying out the route of the Stanley-Balfour railway near Circular Head. The bone had been found in the same district as the large bones of the extinct animal which had been discovered in Mowbray Swamp. He had sent the bone, which was very hard and polished, to Dr. Hall, of the biological department of the Melbourne University, but the species of animal to which it belonged could not be determined.

Mr. Stephens further drew attention to the discovery on the Australian Alps of a grass, *Poa saxicola*, which had previously only been found on Mount Wellington. The discovery was reported in the proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales.

Mr. L. Rodway said that he had been over nearly all the mountains in Tasmania, but he had only found *Poa saxicola* in one small area on Mount Wellington. The discovery was, therefore, a very interesting one, provided that the grass had been correctly identified.

Professor Flynn exhibited dissections of the reproductive organs of certain marsupials, and gave a short address on the manner in which the embryos were borne.

A fish's egg was also exhibited which Professor Flynn identified as that of *Callorhynchus antarcticus*, sometimes called the elephant fish.

Mr. Robert Hall exhibited a number of swallows and swifts to illustrate Mr. Dove's paper. Mr. Hall also exhibited a fish (*Optonurus denticulatus*, Rich.) closely resembling the “whiptail,” which had been dredged in 800 fathoms of water off the coast of New South Wales. It was now safe to record this deep water species as new to the list of the Tasmanian fauna.

OCTOBER 9th, 1911.

The general monthly meeting of the society was held at the Museum on Monday evening, October 9th, 1911.

Dr. Fritz Noetling occupied the chair.

Messrs. G. H. Gibson, M.B., C.M., T. Dunbabin, M.A., R. B. Montgomery, A. R. Tucker, and J. Moore Robinson were elected Fellows.

The Chairman informed the meeting that Bishop Montgomery had presented this portfolio to the Society, and with that knowledge it would be unwise to dispose of it. This was approved by the Fellows.

The following papers were read:—

“Further Notes on the Habits of the Tasmanian Aborigines,” by Fritz Noetling, M.A., Ph.D.

“Notes on the Septum of *Trichosurus canina*,” by Prof. T. T. Flynn, B.Sc.

Mr. L. Rodway exhibited a specimen of a fungus new to Tasmania. It was known as *Geoglossum hirsutum*, and though it had been described from Australia, it had never previously been found in Tasmania. He also showed a specimen of a plant named *Thismia rodwayi*, which he had first found in 1890 on Mount Wellington. It lived in the ground, running along in the humus, and subsisted on the decaying vegetable matter in the soil. There were nine members of the genus, but they were all inhabitants of the tropics. This plant had never been found in Australia or Northern Tasmania, and it was very curious that a plant which belonged to an essentially tropical genus should be found in Southern Tasmania, and nowhere else in Australia. He expected, however, that careful research would show that the plant existed in Australia. It belongs to the family *Burmanniaceæ*, which adjoins the *Orchidææ*.

Mr. G. Brettingham-Moore exhibited a hollowed stone, which he thought showed traces of human handwork. He had found it on Maria Island.

Dr. Noetling said that he thought the stone showed traces of human workmanship, and he did not think it could have been due to Europeans. He could not, however, suggest any use, from what was known of the natives, to which it could have been put.

Mr. L. Rodway said that he did not know of any edible seeds which the natives were likely to use for food, and he did not know of any article of their food which would be likely to be pounded in the stone, unless it was fern roots.

Professor Flynn considered that the stone was purely a natural phenomenon, and was not due to human agency.

Dr. Noetling exhibited a number of stones which showed traces of glacial action. It had been found in South Australia that there were indications of a glacial period at an age when life in any form had not yet appeared on the globe. The boulder clays in which these stones were found showed signs of having undergone great changes due to lateral pressure. Many stones or pebbles were embedded in glacial ice, and when that ice travelled over hard surfaces these pebbles became marked with striae, which were unmistakable. There was no other agency known which could

produce marks of this nature. The theory had been put forward that the poles were continually altering their positions, and that at one time the South Pole was in the neighbourhood of where Sydney now stood. The fact that traces of a very ancient ice-age could be found in Australia was not known when the theory was formed, but the present discovery was a very curious confirmation of it. Whether the theory was true or not, geologists had greatly altered their views of late as to climatic conditions in ancient times. The traces of the ancient ice-age in South Australia extended from South Adelaide to Hergott Springs, and had a thickness of 1,500 feet.

Dr. Noetling also exhibited a very curious specimen, in which the cast of a fossil brachiopod shell had been replaced by gypsum.

NOVEMBER 14th

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held at the Museum last night. The chair was occupied by the President (His Excellency Sir Harry Barron).

Messrs. W. T. McCoy, B.A., and A. C. Stephens, B.A., were elected Fellows of the Society.

Application was made by the Field Naturalists' Club for the use of a room at the Museum. Several members were not in favour of rescinding the rule relating to the letting of rooms, which, it was said, would be necessary before the permission could be granted. Some discussion took place on this question. Ultimately it was postponed, on the ground that no proper notice had been given of an intention to discuss the matter.

Dr. Fritz Noetling read a paper on "Gigantic Marsupials in Tasmania." He contended that until quite recently Tasmania was connected with the mainland, and that there was a relation between fossil marsupials found in Tasmania and those lately unearthed in Queensland. Existing species of mollusca specimens, obtainable at the present time, bearing relation to the gigantic marsupial which is now extinct, showed that the latter were creatures of recent ages.

Mr. Thomas Stephens agreed generally with Dr. Noetling's views; his theory was ingenious, and probably correct. He hoped that the construction of the Stanley-Balfour railway, which was now going on, would, through the agency of the deep cuttings to be made, give a lot of information concerning the geology of the North-West Coast.

Professor T. T. Flynn was to lecture on the "Anatomy of *Petaurus sciurens*." He had been able to secure an animal from Mrs. Roberts, of Beaumaris, and made an examination. The result was purely of a scientific nature, and as it referred only to the anatomy of the animal, would not be very interesting.

A paper entitled "Notes on Duterran's Reconciliation Picture" was read by Dr. Noetling, who said that nobody knew

what has become of the picture. As it was a reconciliation between the blacks and whites, it was an extremely interesting one, and of some scientific value.

I am indebted to Mrs. Lorenzo Lodge, who was on very intimate terms with the Duterreaus, for the following information:—“Benjamin Duterreau was descended from a French family, who had taken refuge in England on account of religious trouble. He was born in London in 1767, where his art education was acquired. He learned the art of steel engraving, and practised it as a business there. Attracted by accounts of the Swan River colony (W.A.), he left London with the intention of settling in the colony, and arrived there in 1832. At that time glowing accounts of Van Diemen’s Land were in circulation, and hearing these, Mr. Duterreau changed his purpose of settling at Swan River, and came on to Hobart Town, accompanied by his daughter and sister-in-law. They resided in the old white house at the corner of Campbell and Patrick streets, and there Mr. Duterreau practised portrait painting principally, and had a well-known reputation in Hobart Town as a portrait painter. Colonel Arthur took a great deal of interest in Mr. Duterreau. Miss Duterreau became governess to the family, and, no doubt, he induced Mr. D. to undertake the portrayal of the aboriginals, and encouraged and aided him in the work. He frequently visited the studio during the progress of the work. As the aboriginals were brought in by Robinson—camping in the yard of his house at the corner of Elizabeth and Warwick streets—he used to supply Duterreau with subjects, bringing them down to him personally to the Campbell-street house, and the results of those visits are to be seen in the numerous paintings, copperplate engravings and plaster casts now in the Museum here. A few years before his death he removed to the stone house in Bathurst street, at present occupied by Mr. Lucas, next King’s Hall, and he died there in 1851, at the age of 84 years. His daughter married Mr. Bogle, of the firm of Kerr and Bogle, merchants, of Hobart, and ultimately returned and settled in England. Most of Duterreau’s best work was sent, by request of Mrs. Bogle, to England after her father’s death.”

Mr. J. W. Beattie said that a Mrs. Lodge informed him that she recollected such a picture. There were two, a small one and a very large one. In reply to a question, she informed him that the large one was given to the Government, and was now probably in the “vaults of the Legislative Council.” Upon inquiry, he ascertained that the small one was framed by Hood’s, of Hobart, for Mr. J. Walker, and sold by that gentleman in 1841 for £50. The large one, painted by Bock, was framed by the same firm in 1843, and was said to be also in the Legislative Council vaults.

Specimens of various descriptions were exhibited and explained by members.

His Excellency referred to the lecture to be given by Dr Mawson at the Town-hall, and asked members present to attend. It would deal with Antaretica and the expedition.