3. "The Comparative Atmospheric Pressure of New Zealand and Great Britain, considered in reference to Dr. Newman's Theory of Physical Deterioration," by C. Rous Marten, F.R.G.S., F.M.S., M.Sc.M.S. (*Transactions*, p. 212.*)

Dr. Newman likened Mr. Marten to the theological disputants of old, who put imaginary statements into the mouths of their enemies, and then took great delight in showing the folly of their statements. If the author had carefully read his paper, he would have found in it no hint even that atmospheric pressure was in any way connected with human degeneracy in New Zealand. On the contrary, the speaker said he believed the opposite was the case, and stated that the Aymaras, who live on the high lands adjoining the Andes, under a pressure several inches less than that of New Zealand, were a finely-developed race, with broad, deep, capacious chests. The author had bolstered up a theory by selecting certain facts and ignoring others. Mr. Marten had quoted Dr. Hahn in his own favour, but Dr. Hahn said directly the opposite. Dr. Hector had shown at the previous meeting that the average height of the barometer in England was over 30, and in New Zealand under 30 inches. The speaker also refused to accept Mr. Marten's 14 selected stations, and held that if the mean of all the barometric stations in Great Britain was taken, the atmospheric pressure there would be found to be greater than in New Zealand.

Dr. Hector did not quite come to the same conclusions as the author, for although he did not think it would have the effect he understood Dr. Newman to assert, yet he thought the average pressure over the British Islands was slightly in excess of New Zealand.

Captain Edwin agreed with Mr. Marten as to the pressure in New Zealand being higher, and also that the humidity of the atmosphere did exercise a great influence over the barometer.

Mr. Campbell remarked that he had seen it stated that, on averaging the barometric pressure over the earth's surface, the same latitudes in the North and South Hemispheres would not have the same pressure, but that this would be found to be the same when ten degrees nearer the Equator in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. Marten, in reply, said that he certainly considered he understood Dr. Newman's statement regarding the pressure, and it was only concerning the difference in pressure that he attempted any comparison. He had obtained his information from reliable sources.

4. "Notes on the Antarctic Petrel (*Priocella antarctica*)," by Dr. Hector, C.M.G., F.R.S. (*Transactions*, p. 464.)

The specimen was presented to the Colonial Museum by Mr. J. J. Buckrell.

5. "Observations on a Species of Shag inhabiting Queen Charlotte Sound," by Dr. W. L. Buller, C.M.G., President. (*Transactions*, p. 338.)

6. "On a Tendency to Deformity in the Bill of *Nestor meridionalis*," by Dr. Buller, C.M.G. (*Transactions*, p. 340.)

7. "On the alleged Intercrossing of *Ocydromus earli* and the Domestic Fowl," by Dr. Buller, C.M.G. (*Transactions*, p. 341.)

8. "Notice of *Senecio perdicioides*," by J. Buchanan, F.L.S.

The President read this paper, which described a plant that had not been met with since the visit of Captain Cook.

---

* [*Erratum.*—Page 213, line 8 and 9 from the bottom, *omit* "a standard work which."]

Dr. Hector remarked that there were on the table this evening this plant, a bird *(Procellaria antarctica)*, and a fish (the Red Mullet), which were all discovered in New Zealand by Captain Cook's Expedition, and had not been since found until now.

---

## Tenth Meeting. *9th December*, 1876.

### Dr. Buller, C.M.G., President, in the chair.

*New Members.*—Allison D. Smith, Capt. T. C. Rowan, of New Plymouth.

1. Mr. W. T. L. Travers said that, before the ordinary business was proceeded with, he wished to lay on the table, for the inspection of members, some specimens of a small Brown Beetle, which is very destructive to the young fruit in the gardens and orchards. He exhibited also some small green apples, with the skin blighted and discoloured owing to the attacks of this beetle. He also wished to mention another fact in natural history which had recently come under his observation. He had for some time past noticed a large species of Yellow Slug infesting the heaths in his greenhouse, their slimy tracks being visible everywhere. He was at first inclined to destroy them, but, on more closely watching their habits, he discovered that they were in reality scavengers, and were completely cleansing the plants of a disgusting little *Aphis*, which he had been unable to eradicate. The slug appeared to be exclusively carnivorous, and he observed it feeding with avidity from a pot of lard, scooping up the fatty matter in a very remarkable way. He might also add that, on mentioning the circumstance to Mr. Martin Chapman, he found that he had made the same observation on the habits of this slug, which had entirely cleansed some rose plants of the swarms of *Aphides* which infested them.

Archdeacon Stock stated that the beetle exhibited by Mr. Travers had been known in Wellington for a period of eight years, and that Mr. Huntley had called attention to its ravages among the young fruit trees.

The President said that Mr. Huntley had read a paper on the subject (Vol. I., p. 29) before this Society, which was illustrated by a series of specimens now in the Colonial Museum. The subject, however, was far from being exhausted. He considered communications of this kind valuable to the Society, because natural history is, after all, a mere record of such observations as those described by Mr. Travers.

2. Mr. Kirk said that, at the request of the President, he had much pleasure in calling the attention of members to a beautiful pot-plant *(Medicago marginata)*, sent over from Government House by Lady Normanby for inspection. It was generally known as the "Snail plant," from a peculiarity in its legumes, which are coiled round in the form of a disc, with coherent inner margins. This was the first time he had met with this plant in the Colony.

3. "On the Longitude of Wellington Observatory," by the Venerable Archdeacon Stock, B.A. (*Transactions*, p. 217.)

In reply to a question from Mr. Thomson as to whether he had compared the personal error, the author stated that, unless he had gone to Sydney, such a comparison would be impossible; and, moreover, for all practical purposes it was quite unnecessary, as the personal error was never more than one-third of a second in reliable work, and that he considered absolute longitude a mathematical impossibility.

Mr. Thomson said it was usual to compare the personal error, and that in the absence of such comparison he considered the observations very incomplete.