

The mat was made more attractive by four strips, the whole length of the mat, about 4 in. wide, being of pure-white kiwi-feathers. The mat was kindly lent for exhibition by Mrs. H. Matthews. As this fine mat has only recently been completed it is evident that the art has not yet died out. It also shows that the North Island kiwi is still plentiful in certain districts, and that albino forms are not rare.

FIFTH MEETING: 13th September, 1898.

A. Bathgate, Vice-president, in the chair.

New Member.—E. A. Petherick, London.

The Chairman mentioned that the third part of Mr. Hamilton's book on "Maori Art" had been published, and was now available for members and the public generally. All members of the Institute had the privilege of acquiring this handsome and valuable work at a reduced rate. The way in which the volume had been turned out by the publishers was a credit to the colony.

Papers.—1. "Notes on certain of the Viscera of the *Notornis*," by Professor W. B. Benham, D.Sc. (*Transactions*, p. 151.)

2. "Notes on the Fourth Skin of *Notornis*," by Professor W. B. Benham, D.Sc. (*Transactions*, p. 146.)

3. A. Hamilton: "On the Distribution of *Notornis*, and General Notes on the Genus."

ABSTRACT.

Mr. A. Hamilton read an interesting paper, stating the facts, so far as they were known, of the distribution of *Notornis*, of its relationship, its habits, and what had been already written and recorded about it. Now that *Notornis* had been proved still to exist, he asked if it would not be advisable for the authorities to organize a search expedition. It was a question whether the takahē should not be scheduled with the other protected birds. In the discussion which took place in the House of Representatives some days ago the question was raised of its being made compulsory for the more valuable specimens of native birds and specimens of native work being offered to the Government before being sent out of the colony. Before, however, such an Act could be made operative the State would have to recognise the claims of a Colonial Museum to a greater measure of support, and be prepared to purchase, under competent scientific direction, specimens which might be submitted. A long list of treasures might have been saved for the colony had such a museum been in existence hitherto. Was it too late? The suggested Act would not propose to stop business transactions of this kind; it would simply say that a declaration must be made of the specimen offered for sale, and the price it was valued at. This declaration would be submitted to the Government authority, and if it was thought desirable to retain the specimen the owner would be advised that negotiations could be opened for the purchase by the Government.

The Chairman observed that shortly after the account of the capture of the *Notornis* appeared in the papers an old Maori client of his from

Waitaki was in his office. He asked him if he had been down to the Museum to see the takahe. The Maori said he had not heard of its having been got, but he had seen one long ago. He described it as a bird like the pukeko, but not so long in the legs and neck, and was bigger, and said it lived in holes under trees in the bush, like the kakapo, but went erect into the holes. He had, he said, seen only one dead one, and that was at Aparima over fifty years ago, when the local natives told him there were plenty between Preservation Inlet and the Waiiau, and that they went in patches. On the map the old Maori indicated the locality referred to as between Lake Hauroto and Preservation Inlet. That portion of the country was probably less explored than any other part of New Zealand, so that if there were any adventurous spirits who wanted to go out and hunt the takahe there was a field for them.

Mr. G. M. Thomson hoped no one would be led into looking for the takahe in the country the Chairman referred to. There was a very limited extent of country; the ground was not high, and it was not more suitable than other places. He had been over the ground, and it had been run over by sheep some years ago. It was known to shepherds sixteen years ago.

Mr. Wilson had listened to what had been said with the greatest possible interest. It seemed to him that a most practical suggestion had been made by Mr. Hamilton—that was, to preserve the life of these birds. The thing that impressed him most was this fact: that this particular bird was not old. Some one mentioned to him that four years was about its age. He did not really know whether it was younger or older than that. The point was that within quite a year or two ago this creature must have been breeding in the mountains; and it was very probable that there was a considerable number of them there still. With the introduction of vermin, such as weasels and stoats, he thought the life of the bird could not be prolonged very much; and if any effort could be made to secure living specimens, and place them on the island that had been set aside for birds, he thought it would be a boon to the whole scientific world. It appeared to him that this was not likely to be done by those going out on camping expeditions. The bird could only be got in winter, when it was driven down from the higher to the lower lands; and that was the time that proper expeditions should be sent out to beat the whole country; and he had no doubt that good results would ensue. He would like to ask Dr. Benham what the specimen exhibited had in its gizzard.

Dr. Benham said the bird's gizzard contained a large quantity of small stones and some cylindrical kind of grass cut up into pieces from $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in length. He had preserved some of the grass, and would be glad to hand it over to a botanist to make out what kind of grass it was.

SIXTH MEETING: 18th October, 1898.

Dr. T. M. Hocken in the chair.

New Member.—Dr. Fulton, Dunedin.

Papers.—1. "On the Study of Natural History," by G. M. Thomson.

ABSTRACT.

One of the objects for which this Institute exists is to promote the study of natural history, by which I take it is meant not the merely biological side of the question, but the wider aspect, which includes all