

## WELLINGTON PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

FIRST MEETING: 17th June, 1891.

E. Tregear, President, in the Chair.

*New Member.*—H. Farquhar.

A copy of Vol. XXIII. of Transactions of the New Zealand Institute was laid on the table; also proof-sheets of Mr. Hudson's work on the entomology of New Zealand, with plates. The latter were greatly admired.

1. Address by the President.

### ABSTRACT.

Mr. Tregear commenced by congratulating Sir James Hector on receiving the founder's medal of the Royal Geographical Society. He then referred to the recent reported discovery of the bones of the *Dinornis* in Queensland, and remarked that soundings recently taken showed solid land once to have existed from New Zealand to Australia, and through the Malay Archipelago to Asia. Whether the moa had been evolved from the emu by gradual transformation, or the emu from the moa, would be for the geologists and naturalists to discuss. The President then referred to the theories as to man's origin, whether from a single pair or from many sources; described the primitive state of the human race, with the progress upward from the cave-dwellers to the pastoral peoples, then to cultivators of the soil, then to dwellers in cities. Referring to the question of marriage, he described the emergence of the communal form into the slave period, and thus to the belief in the wife being the private property of the husband. He then called attention to the agreement between anthropology and the other sciences as to the great lapse of time necessary for mankind to have existed and to have passed through the palæolithic and neolithic periods to the building of great cities, which we now know to have been in existence six thousand years ago. Great portions of Asia and Africa, fertile, and abounding in all descriptions of animal and vegetable life, were still unsettled. Many extracts from the reports of travellers just returned from these wilds were quoted to show the adaptability of those places to the uses of the emigrant. The President, however, did not believe that the colonisation of Africa and other places in the possession of native races was as practicable as was generally believed. The enormous fecundity of the dark races, if relieved of the checks caused by bloodshed and war, would inevitably squeeze out the incomers, and prevent men of high organization existing in force sufficient to control the lower and more persistent racial types. Mr. Tregear concluded by expressing his opinion that the future of the world was not so entirely in the hands of intellectual nations as he had once thought; but, if the advance of mankind was threatened by the overflow of barbaric peoples, he trusted that the time of submersion would be short, and the world soon resume its path of progress, refreshed and invigorated with new and stronger life.

Sir James Hector, in proposing a vote of thanks to the President for his most interesting address, reminded members that within the last few months they had been indebted to Mr. Tregear for a most useful addition to New Zealand scientific literature in his comparative "Dictionary of the Polynesian Languages." His address showed that outside mere philology Mr. Tregear was able to take a wide grasp of the great problem of anthropology. With the President's permission he took this opportunity of introducing Professor Pond, who had just arrived from Cambridge to take the classical chair in the New Zealand University at Auckland.

Professor Pond considered it a high honour that he should, on his first landing, have the opportunity of attending the meeting of such a Society. He complimented Mr. Tregear on the admirable arrangement of his new dictionary—the method was excellent. He was told at Cambridge before leaving that he ought to consider it a high privilege, his being selected for his appointment in the New Zealand University, as the examiners in England thought most highly of the work done by the New Zealand students.

Mr. Travers seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried, and spoke in flattering terms of the able manner in which Mr. Tregear treated the subject of his address.

2. Sir James Hector exhibited a young salmon which had been caught in the Aparima River and forwarded to him by the Marine Department. He said that there could not possibly be any mistake with regard to the specimen being a true salmon. The fact that salmon, after years of fruitless experiments, had now been acclimatised was highly satisfactory, though he feared that the formation of our coast-line was such as would prevent the return of salmon to their own rivers. Should, however, the salmon prove their attachment to the streams in which they were hatched, the colony would have gained a most valuable asset, and one which it would be well to protect with the greatest care.

3. Sir James Hector exhibited samples of the different coals and rocks from the coalfields lately visited. With reference to the Black Ball Mine, a tunnel of 1,230ft. had been driven to reach the coal, and two seams had been cut of first-class-quality coal, making a total of about 20ft. thick of coal. Samples of the rocks from the tunnel were also described. Samples of the coal from the new Cardiff and Mokihinui Company's lease were exhibited, and also samples from the Kaitangata Mine, Otago; and a number of fossils found in sinking the Castle Hill Company's shaft at Kaitangata were also on the table and described. Samples of coal from Orepuki were shown, together with a series of fossils from the Middle Wai-para, in the northern district of Canterbury. These latter were described as being geologically of very great importance, on account of the presence of *Belemnites australis* in association with dicotyledonous leaves, and in the same boulders remains of *Leiodon hawmuriensis*, this being the first time that these Secondary fossils have been found in the Canterbury District.