

## FIFTH MEETING: 4th August, 1890.

James Stewart, C.E., President, in the chair.

*New Members.*—H. Brown, W. Davies, P. L. Dignan, J. P. Macarthur, H. Thomson.

*Papers.*—1. "On the Microscopical Structure of Ohinemuri Gold," by Dr. Rudolf Haeusler. (*Transactions*, p. 335.)

2. "Note on the Habits of the Kingfisher (*Halcyon vagans*)," by J. W. Hall.

## ABSTRACT.

The author raised the question, Is it customary for the kingfisher to capture live birds? Because this winter he had seen one with a live white-eye in its mouth. The tree the kingfisher was perched upon was not many yards distant from him, and he distinctly saw the little wings flutter convulsively as the kingfisher was preparing to beat its prey against the branch. So it could not have been a dead bird casually picked up. Perhaps this, he said, was an application of the *lex talionis*, for, besides being mercilessly persecuted by the small boys with their catapults, the kingfisher was not infrequently captured by the common hawk. But sometimes the hawk does not come off best. One day at Parawai (Thames) a hawk sailed round the bend of a hill, followed (accidentally, he supposed) by a kingfisher. There at once arose a great outcry, and the hawk came again in sight, bearing the kingfisher in its talons. But, nothing daunted, the kingfisher with its pickaxe of a bill pegged away at the breast and abdomen of its captor to such good effect that the hawk was glad to liberate its prey, whereupon the kingfisher flew away apparently but little the worse for the encounter, and carrying with it, he need hardly say, the full sympathy of the on-lookers. A friend of the author had seen a kingfisher dive under water to escape the pursuit of a hawk.

3. "Takahe versus Kakapo;" a reply to Mr. Melland's paper in vol. xxii., *Transactions N.Z. Institute*, by Jas. Park, F.G.S. (*Transactions*, p. 112.)

A discussion arose, the speakers considering that, whatever may have been the origin of the booming noise attributed by Mr. Park to the *Notornis*, Mr. Melland was hardly justified in assigning it so confidently to the kakapo.

4. "On the Birds of the Kermadec Islands," by T. F. Cheeseman, F.L.S. (*Transactions*, p. 216.)

In illustration of his paper, the author exhibited numerous skins and eggs of the species mentioned, collected by Mr. Bell, Captain Fairchild, and himself.

5. "The Age of Pulp: a Speculation on the Future of the Wood-fibre Industry," by the Rev. P. Walsh. (*Transactions*, p. 523.)

## SIXTH MEETING: 18th August, 1890.

James Stewart, C.E., President, in the chair.

Professor F. D. Brown gave a popular lecture on "John Dalton and his Work."