

viz., "That neither they nor their forefathers had ever seen the moa, because the last moas were destroyed at the time of the Deluge." That the *Dinornis* had been killed and cooked by men in New Zealand was certain from the geological evidence, but that the Polynesian Maori had known the *Dinornis* at all was highly improbable. Possibly vague accounts had been handed down from the prehistoric inhabitants (moa-hunters), with whom it was almost certain the Polynesian immigrants had intermarried.

Mr. Maskell did not think Maori stories were worth much as evidence in this matter of the moa. He considered the following facts were worth all the legends that could be brought forward: (1.) A certain Maori told Colonel McDonnell that he had hunted and killed the moa, and pointed out the place where the bones would be found, and where they were found. (2.) Moa-bones lay in millions on the open ground in the South Island, in Canterbury, where there was not likely ever to have been dense vegetation. Would they, under such circumstances, last for generations? (3.) Sir F. Weld asserted that, when making a journey into the interior shortly after 1840, he had been warned by natives to look out for the big bird that he might meet on the mountains, and that would kick a man to death.

Captain Mair, in reply, said that no doubt the story referred to was told to Colonel McDonnell to please him. The vegetation where bones were found in the North was quite thick, and he did not see why it should not have been equally dense in the South at some period. The story told to Sir F. Weld was merely told to alarm him. This was often done by the natives; he had been told things of this kind himself. The bones found on the line of General Cameron's march were probably beef-bones. He did not think the Maoris knew anything concerning the moa even for eight generations back.

3. The President exhibited a skin of the true hedge-sparrow (*Accentor modularis*), killed in the suburbs of Wellington, which had been sent to him by Mr. Capper for identification. He remarked that it was most satisfactory to have this tangible proof that this very useful bird had become acclimatised in this country. He had several times observed it in his own garden in Wellington, hunting for insects in the shade of trees, and there was every reason to hope that it would increase and multiply.

4. The President also exhibited a beautiful specimen of the white tern (*Gygis alba*) from the Kermadec Islands. He mentioned that this species, instead of depositing its eggs on rocks, or on the sands of the sea-shore, like the rest, placed them on boughs of trees overhanging the water.

5. "Note on the *Mus maorium*, Hutton," with specimen, by Sir W. Buller. (*Transactions*, p. 49.)

Captain Mair remarked that this little rat was exactly similar to that inhabiting White Island, in the Bay of Plenty.

Sir James Hector said that this rat was entirely different from some others sent from Nelson at the time of the irruption of rats referred to, and which he was unable to distinguish from *Mus rattus*.