

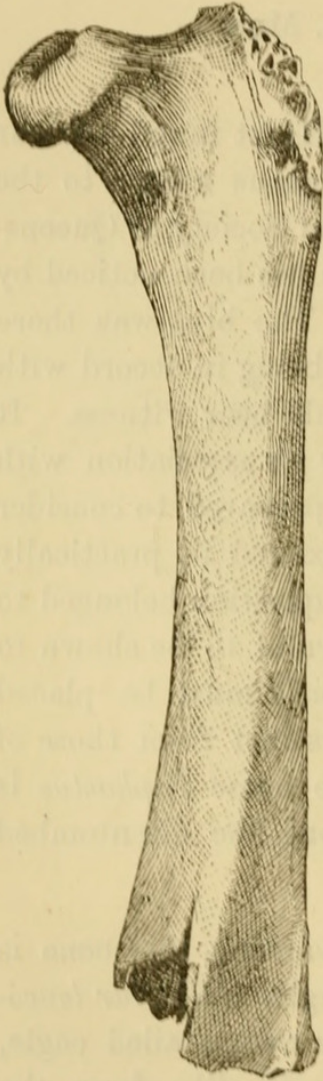
NOTE ON AN EXTINCT EAGLE.

BY C. W. DE VIS, M.A., CORR. MEM.

In company with *Lithophaps ulnaris*, Mr. Hurst found a femur of an eagle which is irreconcilable with any genus known to the writer. But, in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland" (Vol. VI., p. 161), a humerus of an eagle has been noticed by him under the name of *Uroaetus brachialis*. The bird was there referred provisionally to the extant genus as being in accord with it so far as one extremity of a long bone could bear witness. It has now become more than doubtful whether its association with *Uroaetus* can be maintained. If we are not prepared to consider it more probable that two species of eagles existed in practically the same habitat than that the two bones in question belonged to the same bird, and of this there is nothing valid to be shown to the contrary, then the specific name *brachialis* must be placed under a new genus, for the femur is quite distinct from those of recent genera. For this probable genus the name *Taphaetus* is suggested in allusion to its appearance among the disintombed remains of its contemporaries.

Restoring the condylar region, which is wanting, this bone is of the same length as that of the male sea-eagle, *Haliastur leucogaster*, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ mm. shorter than in a female wedge-tailed eagle, *U. audax*. The femoral index 9.4 separates it alike from the hawks and kites, with a much lower, and from *Baza* which has for a hawk the exceptionally high one of 10.4; it likewise excludes *Haliaetus*, which has the highest observed in the Falconidæ, 10.88, but agrees fairly well with that of *Uroaetus*, *Nisaetus*, *Haliastur*, and *Pandion*; the last named genus is, however, put out of court by the want of a pneumatic foramen adjacent to the trochanterian ridge, an abnormality not presented by the fossil. From the other

genera it differs as follows :—The “neck” being longer the proximal end of the shaft is in consequence notably broader—the neck itself is also broader in the opposite direction between the head and the trochanter. The entoanconal surface of the upper part of



the shaft as far as the *extensor cruris* ridge is much flattened, and between the head and the pneumatic foramen becomes concave. The pneumatic foramen is remarkably small, about half its customary size in recent genera, and is partially concealed by a deflection of the sharp edge of the trochanterian ridge. When the bone rests on its outer side the flattening of the anconal surface proximally and of the palmar distally brings into prominence the pectineal ridge, which thus forms a high and sharp inner margin; this ridge is continuous from the entepicondyle to within a short distance from the head, where it ends in a distinct tubercle representing a third trochanter, a feature rarely occurring in the femora of birds. The *extensor cruris* ridge descends much further on the anconal surface than in existing genera of the family. On the palmar surface the linea aspera commencing low down as a faint ridge enlarges into a well marked eminence opposite the interval between the end of the pectineal ridge and the medullary orifice, sending off a short

branch towards the latter, and continuing its main course upwards with a strong curve towards the palmar end of the muscular area of the trochanter. The pit above the entepicondyle absent in *Haliaetus* and *Haliastur* is in the fossil situated in the mouth of the groove between the condyle and epicondyle.

The characters of the genus are for the present but the leading characters of the femur.

Femur stout (index circ. 9.4), proximal end transversely expanded, shaft compressed, pneumatic foramen small; a rudimentary third trochanter, entepicondylar pit between condyle and epicondyle.

NOTES AND EXHIBITS.

Mr. Musson sent for exhibition a collection of 63 species of New Zealand land and freshwater mollusca collected by him during a recent visit, and determined by Mr. Suter, of Christchurch.

Mr. De Vis sent for exhibition the bones of fossil birds described in his papers.

Mr. Hedley exhibited a number of the more remarkable land shells from New Guinea in illustration of his paper.

Mr. Trebeck exhibited galls of certain diptera (*Phytomyzidæ* and *Cecidomyidæ*) from Mount Wilson.

Dr. Cox exhibited a specimen of the rock lily (*Dendrobium speciosum*), throwing off a bud in a somewhat remarkable manner.

Mr. Skuse drew attention to an interesting article in the last number of the *Pharmaceutical Journal of N.S.W.*, on insects injurious to drugs, one of them probably the same species of moth as was exhibited by Mr. Froggatt at the Society's meeting in March, 1890, the insects shown having pupated in a tin of cayenne pepper.

Mr. Fletcher exhibited for Mr. J. H. Rose two living specimens of an inland species of frog (*Chiroleptes platycephalus*, Gthr.), obtained near Walgett, previously only recorded from Bourke and Dandaloo, N.S.W. It is nocturnal in its habits and an expert burrower, Mr. Rose reporting that he has never met with it above ground during the daytime.



1891. "Note on an extinct Eagle." *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 6, 123–125. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.29879>.

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