FURTHER DISCOVERY OF REMAINS OF A GREAT EXTINCT WINGLESS BIRD IN AUSTRALIA.

SIR,—In the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE for 1869, Vol. VI. p. 383, will be found a letter from the Rev. W. B. Clarke, F.G.S., St. Leonard's, New South Wales, giving an account of the discovery of the femur of a bird resembling *Dinornis*, found in sinking a well at Peak Downs, Queensland. The bone in question was submitted to me, and I pronounced it to be the femur of a bird about the size of *Dinornis robustus*.

Since then I learn that Prof. Owen has described it, from a *cast*[1] which I had prepared and forwarded to him, as *Dinornis* (*Dromornis ?*) *Australis*,[2] in the Zoological Transactions for 1873, vol. viii. part vi.

And here let me state that the mineralized condition of this bone is precisely that of hundreds of other bones from various Australian localities which are preserved in this Museum, the interior being full of calc-spar crystals, or mineralized in such a manner as to remove all trace of organic substance, and render the bone quite brittle like a piece of stone. The modern fracture across the bone shows this extremely well. The ancient "crushed-in fractures" may possibly have been done with a stone tomahawk at the time when the bone was fresh. I have found the fractured crown of a *human molar* in the same matrix as *Diprotodon* and *Thylacoleo* at Wellington in this Colony. Man may therefore have been the contemporary of these animals and also of the *Dromornis*.

Since the discovery of this bone at Peak Downs, I have gone over the specimens in the Sydney Museum, and find more *Australian Moa-bones* in the collection, but unfortunately without date or locality, and of which therefore I can take no notice.

But on the 5th September, 1873, I received a letter from Mr. James F. Plunkett, informing me that he had forwarded me a parcel of bones, etc. They were from an alluvial gold-mining claim on the Black Lead, known as the Sand-hole, at a depth of 160 feet in a "pot-hole," imbedded in brown dust. The bones are of a whitish colour, and adhere strongly to the tongue. They consist chiefly of fragments of vertebræ, and probably belonged to a bird rather stronger built than our Emu (*Dromornis*), but not larger in size.

They are from Gulgang, one of our famous digging townships in the Bathurst district.

I may mention that Dr. George Bennett, F.L.S., has just received a very fine series of *Diprotodon* remains from his son Mr. George Bennett, from the Gamrie Creek, Darling Downs. I have examined them, and with the assistance of our eminent formatore, Mr. Henry Barnes, have succeeded in restoring the most important parts of this great animal.

The chief point established is the form of the jaw, the inflected angle of which resembles that of the Phalangers, and was not as

[1] The original specimen is now in the Sydney Museum.

[2] I had already described it in one of our local papers, and proposed for it the name of *Dinornis Owenii*.

deep as that of the Wombats. This part of the jaw has never been seen before, and will probably cause Prof. Owen to modify somewhat his restoration of *Diprotodon*.

GERARD KREFFT.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, SYDNEY, *Sep.* 28, 1873.

OBITUARY.

PROFESSOR AGASSIZ.

BY the death of Prof. Agassiz, Science has lost one of her most distinguished students. Louis Jean Rodolphe Agassiz was born on May 28th, 1807, in the parish of Mottier, between the lakes of Neuchâtel and Morat. He received his early education at Bienne, from which he went to the Academy at Lausanne, and afterwards studied medicine and science at the Universities of Zürich, Heidelberg, and Munich. In 1837 he was Professor of Natural History in the University of Neuchâtel, but long before this he had manifested that great power of investigation which speedily raised him to a high position among the scientific men of his time.

His earliest studies were directed to ichthyology, and especially to the fish of his native country. His first memoir on this subject was published in 1828, and in 1829 we find him describing the more remarkable fish obtained by Spix and Martius in their Brazilian travels. He afterwards turned his attention more particularly to fossil fish, for the classification of which he proposed a new system, founded on characters derived from the scales. In fossil ichthyology Agassiz speedily became the chief authority, and after publishing numerous memoirs treating of separate branches of this difficult subject, all of the highest value, he brought his labours in this department to their culmination by the publication of his magnificent "Recherches sur les Poissons fossiles," which appeared at Neuchâtel between the years 1833 and 1844 in five large quarto volumes, illustrated by the same number of volumes of beautifully prepared plates in folio. This work, which is admirably executed in all respects, is undoubtedly Agassiz's grandest contribution to scientific literature; it has never been, and probably never will be, surpassed. In aid of its publication the Geological Society voted the author the proceeds of the Wollaston Donation Fund in 1833, and in recognition of the valuable services rendered by him to this particular department of science, the same Society, in 1836, presented him with the Wollaston medal. Whilst this work was in progress, Agassiz engaged in the study of certain groups of fossils, especially those belonging to the class Echinodermata (starfishes and sea-urchins), upon which he published many memoirs, some of them prepared in conjunction with M. T. Desor. His "Nomenclator Zoologicus," commenced in 1842, but not completed until 1848, is a work of enormous labour, containing a nearly complete classified list of all names employed in zoology up to the date of its preparation for genera and groups of higher systematic value, with references to the authors who invented them and the works in which they were first used. A task of almost