

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB.—Lovers of nature and field students will hail with satisfaction the formation of a Field Naturalists' Association at Hobart. In all Australia where could be found a better and more beautiful collecting and observing ground than the environments of Mt. Wellington? The objects of the Club are the encouragement of the study of nature, and the collection, preservation, and systematic classification of specimens, to be promoted by periodical meetings and excursions, the formation of a library, and the publication of papers and proceedings when deemed advisable. The office-bearers for the year are:—Chairman, Dr. Gerald Smith; vice-chairman, Mr. Samuel Clemes; secretary and treasurer, Mr. E. A. Elliott; committee: Messrs. E. S. Anthony, A. Conlon, M. W. Harrison, A. M. Lee, A. Morton, and J. E. Smith.

Coloured Figure Fund.

THE following donations are acknowledged, with thanks:—F. L. B., 10s.; E. D'Ombraïn, 5s.; R. Wace, 6s.; Geo. Graham, 5s.; T. Iredale, 10s. 6d.; T. Tindale, 5s.; Dr. Magillivray, £1 2s.; J. M'Clymont, 7s. 6d.; W. B. Barnard, 5s.; H. E. Hill, 5s.; Miss M. Brumby, 5s.

Bird Preservation in New Zealand.

AT the Sydney session of the A.O.U. Colonel Legge referred to the interest taken by members of the Union in bird preservation, and spoke of the lamentable extinction of interesting birds in New Zealand, such as the *Notornis*, the Quail (*Coturnix novæ-zealandiæ*), the Macquarie Island Rail, one of the *Cyanorhamphus* genus of Parrakeets, &c., &c.

He alluded to the praiseworthy efforts of the New Zealand Government to preserve other interesting endemic forms, such as *Apteryx*, *Ocydromus*, &c., in the "bird sanctuaries" of Resolution Island and Little Barrier Island.

The subject of the further preservation of these restricted New Zealand forms was dealt with by the Committee of the Biological Section, A.A.A.S., under Colonel Legge's presidency, and as the result he took the opportunity, when in Wellington, of officially addressing Sir Joseph Ward, in whose department the subject of bird preservation is dealt with, on the preservation of the very interesting "Flightless Rail" of the Chatham Islands (*Cobalus modestus*), which has become almost extinct from several causes—clearing of low scrub, destruction of the rough pasturage by sheep, and finally by the ruthless onslaught of the fast-

disappearing species by a collector, on behalf, it is reported, of the Tring Museum, when about 20 specimens were captured.

Colonel Legge's communication, written as president of the Biological Section, A.A.A.S., was favourably received, and he has recently received a courteous letter of thanks from the Government of New Zealand for having called attention to the matter, with a copy of the *Gazette* containing a notice proclaiming the species as absolutely protected, and instructing the magistrate to use every effort to preserve the Rail in future.

The only doubt is whether the bird is not already extinct. If so, this will be another lamentable disappearance of a specialized New Zealand form, which is all the more regrettable inasmuch as this Rail formed an interesting link between the New Zealand and Lord Howe Island avifauna, and an interesting testimony to the former land-connection, in past geological times, between the two localities.