

place for nesting, for the holes in dead pine trees, left by the past year's woodpeckers, offer it a convenient retreat. The dead pine trees therefore contribute to this bird's increase.

The Robin stops here a little while in March on its way North, and as this is the time when the grounds are burned over, they collect morning and evening on these patches, to pick up the half roasted insects, and getting quite fat, are shot for food by hundreds.

The great number of Woodpeckers here seen must be noticed by every one. Not only does every species known in the United States here reside, but numerous specimens of each, and especially the Red-headed and Golden-winged, which meet the view on every side. Their great numbers are in exact accordance with many conditions to which we have alluded, for they seem always to follow, on the track of the wood-boring insects.

Dr. Cabot remarked that from his own observations he had been led to believe that the Vultures are guided by the sense of smell as well as by that of sight in the discovery of their prey. During his stay in Yucatan, he observed that the body of a Turkey Buzzard thrown into a dense thicket was discovered by its surviving companions; giving reason to believe that they had been guided to it by the former sense rather than the latter. The cannibal habits of the species were also verified in the instance in question.

Mr. Ayers exhibited to the Society a Starfish, which he believed to be the type of a new genus, allied to *Pentagonaster*, Gray, although distinct from it, which he proposed to call

STEPHANASTER Ayres.

Body depressed, nearly flat, formed of smooth, rounded, prominent, spineless plates or ossicula, each surrounded with a ring of granules. Margin formed by a double row of larger, smooth, oblong plates, similarly bordered; the terminal one of each series enlarged and convex, thus forming a distinct protuberance at the end of each arm. Plates of lower surface like those of upper,

but more crowded and less prominent ; those near the border with an even, central groove. Ambulacra margined with 2-4 series of smooth, close, equal spines. Madreporiform tubercle single, lateral.

The specimen from which the description is taken was brought from Patangaroa, New Zealand. It displays much beauty of form and structure, and probably also during life, of color, and I would, therefore, propose the name of

S. ELEGANS.

Dorsal plates arranged somewhat symmetrically, the largest in the centre, and in lines radiating to the arms. Sides of body concave, but not deeply so, of unequal length, one bearing but three marginal plates while the others have four. The prominent knobs formed by the four swollen, marginal plates at the extremity of each arm, constitute a striking feature of the species. The sort of crown shown by each plate, with its border of granules, readily suggests the generic name.

Specimen not quite four inches in breadth.

Mr. Ayres stated that in taking a cast in type metal of the specimen described, he had observed a singular phenomenon. The fused metal having become partially cooled, so as not to run well in the mould, he threw it into cold water ; when the whole mass immediately divided into fusiform bodies, most of them about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch long, and about two lines thick in the middle. Some of them were a little obtuse, and ragged at one end, and a few were pear-shaped ; but most of them presented the form of two regular cones with quite sharp apices, united by the apposition of their bases. The specimens were exhibited to the Society.

Prof. Wyman stated that in studying the nervous system of the tadpoles of the common Bull-frog, he had noticed an interesting peculiarity in the distribution of the vagus nerve. Van Deen first described in Batrachian Reptiles the existence of a *nervus lateralis*, similar to that found under the lateral line in fishes ; in addition to this, Prof. Wyman had



Ayres, W. O. 1851. "[The type of a new genus, allied to *Pentagonaster*, Gray]."
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