

twelve tentacles. His next new one is a *Tima*, which he has named *Tima Forbesii*, in memory of the late Professor E. Forbes; the principal difference between it and *Tima Bairdii* is that instead of having only sixteen tentacles, in it they are numerous. Several others came in for their share of notice, and then he mentioned *Goodsirea mirabilis*, a new genus founded by Dr. T. Strethill Wright, and published by him in the second volume of the Transactions of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh. The author got this specimen at Peterhead in 1851. He fully confirmed Dr. Wright's observations, and added that some of his specimens had two additional, but shorter tentacles than Dr. Wright's; he thought this only a sexual difference. He then described what he considered the most curious of all he had seen, a new genus (*Staurophora*) to the British shores, and the largest naked-eyed Medusa hitherto noticed in our seas. It was first found in the Pacific by Mertens when on a voyage round the world; since found by Agassiz in Boston Bay, America, in 1849, and was described by him in a paper entitled "Contributions to the Natural History of the *Acalephæ* of North America." The umbrella is crossed by four gastrovascular canals; from each of them hang two curtain-like masses; and, to appearance, it has neither mouth nor stomach. However, by parting the curtains both are to be seen. He described it at great length, and stated that he got it off Peterhead several times in 1851, and that it grew from  $\frac{6}{8}$  in. in breadth to  $3\frac{2}{8}$  in. in breadth between May and June. He has named it *Staurophora Keithii*, to mark his respect for the founder of Marischal College, Aberdeen, it having been first found near Keith Inch, Peterhead, once the property of the unfortunate house of Keith.

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*On the Zoological Aspects of the Grouse-disease.*

By the Rev. H. B. TRISTRAM, M.A., F.R.S.

The rapid extension and epidemic character of the grouse-disease was attributed in great measure to the indiscriminate slaughter of predatory animals. These, it was true, destroyed game, but it was only the weakest and the most diseased animals that they could make a prey of. In this way disease was stamped out, as had been artificially done with the cattle plague. He commented severely on the encouragement given by landed proprietors to the destruction of wild animals, complaining that upon this question game-preservers were more open to be influenced by ignorant gamekeepers than by naturalists. The grouse-disease had existed sporadically for at least two years before it was generally noticed.

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*On Birds' Nests and their Plumage; or the Relation between Sexual Differences of Colour and the Mode of Nidification in Birds.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE, F.R.G.S., F.L.S.

The author pointed out the hitherto unnoticed fact, that whenever female birds resembled the males in being adorned with gay and conspicuous colours, their nests were so placed or so constructed as to conceal the sitting bird. He showed that this generalization was supported by a vast number of facts in all the chief groups of birds, while the exceptions were few and unimportant, and concluded by pointing out its correspondence with the general principle of protection in modifying colour, and by arguing that the whole of the phenomena could be well explained on the theory of the preservation of useful variations.

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ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

*On Protogon in relation to the Molecular Theory of Organization.*

By Prof. HUGHES BENNETT, M.D., F.R.S.E., of Edinburgh.

The author pointed out that the progress of scientific discovery tended singularly to confirm the truth of the molecular theory of organization, which he had first laid before the Association at its Meeting in Glasgow twelve years ago\*. The

\* Report of the British Association, 1855, p. 119.