

or his looking on at the game: nor, though I offered a good price for a boomerang, did any one care to fetch one from the village.



ORNITHORHYNCHUS PARADOXUS.

Down by the river bank I found a Black camped by a fire, with three women, and a lot of mongrel curs. He was just going to fish. He had a gun, and was much excited at the notion of "three half-a-crown" for a *Platypus*. We crept along the bank of the river, the Black first, then I, then my companion. The Black went stealthily along, with his head stretched forward, and every muscle tense, stepping with the utmost care, so as not to rustle a twig or break a stick under foot, and assuming a peculiarly wild animal appearance, such somewhat as I had noticed in a Tamil guide of mine in Ceylon when we were hunting for peacocks and deer. Once he started back, as a snake made off through the bushes.

It was all to no purpose. I was doomed not to see a living *Platypus* or even a Kangaroo in Australia. I saw only the footprints of the *Platypus* (like those of a duck), which the Black pointed out to me, in a regularly beaten track, made by the animals from one pond to another. The Black said that he was certain the *Platypus* did not lay eggs, and that he had several times seen the young ones, and his description of them agreed with what I knew from Dr. Bennett's researches on the subject.

Next day, as I was going down in the coach, I received two specimens of the *Platypus*, shot by this man. Unfortunately, the jolting and heat of the coach, on the journey down to the coast, rather spoilt them for microscopical examination, for which I had wished to procure them. I wished especially to examine the eyes, to see if the retina contains brightly pigmented bodies, as in the case of reptiles and birds. I could not find any trace of them; but possibly, if the tissues had been fresher, I should have met with them, for Hoffman has discovered their existence in marsupials.