## THE DOCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.

The ornithorhynchus or platypus is a singular animal, which seems to form a connecting link between the mammals and birds, and in some respects having affinities even with reptiles. It is from 18 to 22 inches long, and has a stubby tail 5 inches long. The color is brown above and whitish below. The jaws are inclosed in a a horny-sheath, very sensitive, like the bill of a duck, and have two horny teeth on each side; the snout is flat and broad, the lower jaw shorter and narrower, the eyes small and brilliant; ears not apparent externally, with an aperture that can be opened or shutat will; and the fur is softand thick, like that of the otter. The legs are short, and the feet five toed, and webbed. It secretes milk for the nourishment of its young, which are born blind and naked. It burrows in the banks of streams, where it passes the in the banks of streams, where it passes the
day in sleep, rolled up like a ball, coming out at dusk and during the night in search of at dusk and during the night in search of
food. It is an excellent swimmer and diver, and feeds upon worms, insects, and small aquatic animals, in the manner of a duck. It walks very well, and climbs trees with facility. It can remain under water for eight minutes at a time; it is cleanly in habit, and fond of warmth and dryness. The young die very soon in confinement.

## Poisoning by Earrings.

Two young girls in Paris suffered from blepharitis, and one of them also from an inflammation of the lower part'of the left auricle. All the usual remedies proved inefficacious, but both patients quickly recovered after their copper earrings were discarded.

PROPOSED BALLOON VOYAGE TO THE NORTH POLE. We find in the London Graphic the annexed engraving of anarrangement of balloons proposed by Mr. Henry Coxwell of England as a means of crossing the Palæocrystic Sea and so reaching the north pole. Our contemporary attributes to Commander Cheyne, R.N., the origination of the idea of using balloons for this purpose. It is believed that the three balloons connected in the manner shown in our engraving would carry six men. besides three tons weight of gear, boat cars, stores, provisions, tents, sledges, dogs, compressed gas, and ballast. The triangular framework connecting the balloons would be fitted with foot ropes, so that the occupants could go from one balloon to another in the same manner as sailors lie out upon the yards of a ship, and the balloons would be equipoised by means of bags of ballast suspended from this framework, and hauled to the ballast suspended from this framework, and hauled to the
required position by ropes. Trail ropes would be attached to the balloons, so as to prevent their ascent above a certain height (about 500 feet), at which elevation they would be to the balloons, so as to prevent their ascent above a certain usually rough, round heaps of stone and turf and some of a height (about 500 feet), at which elevation they would be peculiar oblong shape. The large mounds are about fifty
balateed in the air, the spare ends of the ropes trailing over feet in diameter and five feet high in the center. Their con-
the ice. The boat cars would be housed in for warmth; and telegraphic communication kept up with the ships by means of a wire uncoiled from a large wheel (see sketch) as the balloons moved onward. This wire, being marked at every five miles, would also serve to keep a record of the distance traversed. Commander Cheyne proposes that the balloons should start about the end of May, on the curve of a wind circle, of known diameter, ascertained approximately by me

## THE DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.

teorological observations conducted on board the vessel, and at two observatories some thirty miles distant in opposite di rections. It is estimated that, with a knowledge of the diameter of the wind circle, and the known distance from the Pole, the balloons could be landed within at least twenty miles of the long wished-for goal. There the balloons woald be securely moored; and when the necessary observations at the Pole had been carried out, a return wind would be secured for their return, the requisite full inflation having been made by means of the surplus gas taken out in a compressed condition. The returning voyagers would ar rest their course to the southward on the parallel of latitude on which they left their ship, and the remainder of their journey, east or west, would be performed by means of the dogs and sledges conveyed in the balloons.

## Recent Archæological Discoveries.

In a volume on " Notes on the Barrows and Bone Caves Derbyshire," Mr. Rooke Pennington, the author gives De ingerting fact in regard to exploration mad, give me interesting facts in regard to explorations made nea astleton. The surrounding country is dotted with tumuli,
 patent law.
ents are all the-evidence in existence as to the beliefs practices and social life of men who tenanted the British slands in the neolithic or polished stone and bronze periods f culture. In one barrow was found a stone cist made of ixrough slabs, four for the sides and two for top and buttom. ragments of pottery with rude scratches for ornamentatio id seattered around Near by and of a young man, buried in a crouching posi tion. Large pieces of limestone were piled around and there were many bones of th short-horned ox, the boar and the horse. It was evident the young man was one of high rank, both from the high mound and the bones of the animals, which were, Mr. Pen nington thinks, the remains of a funeral feast. An awl made of stag horn and a jet ornament were the only personal article found.
In a recent number of the Athenaion is a short summary of the discoveries which have been recently made in tombs at Spata in Attica, Greece. To the south of the village a square chamber cut in the rock was found accidentally at a depth of about 17 feet from the surface. On the eastern and northern sides of this chamber were smaller ones. The door leading into the great chamber was walled up with small stones and earth, a small aper ture being left at the top; the entrance to th $t$ wo smaller chambers was free. In clearing out the passage were found many objects in glass or ivory and a few in silver, gold, bronze and terra cotta; also a few ashes and bones. These objects were found scattered about in the earth, as if the tomb had been anciently sacked and some of its contents dropped by the plunderers in their way out. In the northwest corner a layer of ashes and burnt bones was found intact.

## Patent Law for Switzerland

Switzerland and Holland are the only two European nations that at the present time refuse to inventors the protection of patents. Holland, it seems, is soon to be left alone in that glory. A bill is notv under discussion, prepared by Federal Councillor Droz, which if passed will give to the republic of Switzerland a patent law system very much like that of the United States. The fees for patents are to be small, and the mode of securing inventions simple. We shall give our readers due notice of the passage of the Swiss

Charcoal for Offensive Breath. - A correspondent f the Dental Cosmos says that the best treatment in regard to offensive breath is the use of pulverized charcoal, two o hree tablespoonfuls per week, taken in a glass of water be fore retiring for the night.


