

THE FURTHER DISCOVERY OF DUGONG BONES
ON THE COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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(Plate iv.)

For an opportunity of again recording the occurrence of bones of the Dugong (*Halicore dugong*, Gmelin, sp.) on the coast of New South Wales, I am indebted to Mr. P. E. Williams, Comptroller of the Government Savings Bank, and Secretary to the Sydney Ethnological Committee.

During the excavation of Shea's Creek, Cook River, Botany Bay, for the canal bearing the same name, portions of a Dugong skeleton were discovered near the top of the estuarine clay, and just above the extensive estuarine shell bed which is so marked a stratigraphical feature in the alluvial section laid bare by the canal cutting. "They were five feet six inches to eight feet six inches below the present high-water level, and a total depth of four feet six inches to seven feet six inches below the swamp surface level, previous to excavation."¹ The bones recovered were vertebræ, ribs, and the nearly perfect skull. It was pointed out by Messrs. T. W. E. David, J. W. Grimshaw, and the writer, that the present southerly limit of the Dugong is probably Wide Bay, on the Queensland coast, although it was formerly to be caught in Moreton Bay.² Only two reliable records of the

¹ Etheridge, David, and Grimshaw—Journ. Roy. Soc. N.S. Wales, xxx 1896, p. 171.

² I have since learned that the Dugong is still caught in Moreton Bay Mr. C. Hedley has called my attention to a footnote in Britton and Bladon's "History of New South Wales" (ii., 1894, p. 97) quoting a paragraph from Collins, which reads as follows:—"About this time (March, 1795), the spirit of inquiry being on foot, Mr Cummings, an officer of the Corps, made an excursion to the southward of Botany Bay, and brought back with him some of the head bones of a marine animal, which on inspection Captain [William] Patterson the only naturalist in the country, pronounced to have belonged to the animal described by M. de Buffon, and named by him the Manatee (Collins—Acc. English Colony N.S.W., 1st Ed., l. p. 409.)" The wording in the second edition differs slightly. If for Manatee we read Dugong we have confirmatory evidence of the Shea's Creek occurrence, and at a slightly more southern locality.