

every way. Its exact sphere of usefulness in the great scale of creation seems to be in an humble way to assist to remove decaying matters and to keep down the smaller insects and their larvæ, etc., and by its small burrows to allow, more or less, the transmission of air into the soil.

The *tout ensemble* of the little being seems replete with design for its mode of life. The smooth hexagonal scales are so arranged that it can move in any direction and no resistance is offered to its progress. The small spine at the caudal extremity, firm and rounded, serves as a point for fixing the tail, so as to enable it to assist the head in burrowing forward, and the solid wedge-shaped snout is thus furnished with a fulcrum at the opposite end of the body. The lower jaw fits well into its place, and is completely covered over by the upper lip, so that with the strong inferior maxillaries a solid wedge is formed, and the smoothness of the entire scales enables it to glide on its way, giving the very smallest resistance possible to its progress. The whole animal would seem to glide through the soft bottom soils deposited by rivers and streams, and although the eager collector might have many specimens close at hand he would have no notice of their presence. The specimen before you was taken near the surface of the soil in April or beginning of May, and as Mr. Toudouze wrote me he found none afterwards it may be presumed they descended from the surface to cooler and deeper retreats, to avoid the parched surface of the earth and to follow their prey.

In concluding, I may say that both Mr. Baird and Dr. Yarrow examined my "Rena Dulcis" and considered it *Ophthalmidon*; and so did I. Nevertheless I may be in a grave error, and if so I am glad to be informed of it.

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## BASALTS.

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### 1.

Any one walking around the Blomidon shore at low water must be aware of the presence of hard crystalline rocks, presenting knife-like edges not to be trodden upon with impunity. One cut the sole of my field boots and others subsequently made walking very uncomfortable. The greater part of these were of irregular shapes, but many were true "basaltic prisms." As my examination of this region was geological I did not shrink from the task of bringing away some of these, notwithstanding their weight.

Having had my attention lately turned to the polariscopic and microscopic study of crystalline and metamorphic rocks, I selected one of those prisms as representative, "*Blomidon*" being a classic name in Mineralogy and not unfamiliar in Geology.

I had fine sections made of this and other rocks, by Dr. Julien of New York. Of these a polariscopic and microscopic examination was made and the results communicated to the Institute of Natural Science at its last meeting. The constituents of this microscopically homogeneous rock were seen to be Labradorite and Augite, with the accidental minerals, quartz, magnetite and Olivenite. The last was in small crystals, partly decomposed. The rock is a *dolerite*.

### 2.

The rocks of *Blomidon* are continued westerly to Briar Island. On the opposite side of St. Mary's Bay is Weymouth. When I was examining the geology of Digby and Yarmouth Counties I saw a large basaltic boulder near the railway station at this place. My hammer soon showed me that it was basaltic. The broken pieces examined "microscopically" with pocket magnifying glass, showed olivenite in abundance