

SOIREE.

FOURTH.—On Wednesday, the 2nd February, Mr. Henry M. Ami contributed a note on the "Sequence of Geological Formations about Ottawa," after which Mr. James Fletcher read a very interesting and valuable paper on "Vegetable Parasites." As these papers will appear in future numbers of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST, it is not necessary to give any abstract of them here. They were followed by a lengthy discussion, principally upon the degree of parasitism which might be correctly attributed to monotropa and comandra. Prof. Macoun considered that those present had listened to a paper of unusual interest and clearness of statement, and supported Mr. Fletcher in his views on the parasitism of the above named plants. Dr. Baptie on the other hand was of the opinion that comandra was capable of existing quite independently of any other plant, as it was well supplied with roots, while the attachments to the roots of other plants were few in number. Prof. Macoun said that this plant belonged to the order next to that in which the mistletoe was placed, and in his opinion was at least semi-parasitic. He found it impossible to dry this plant green, and this fact would, as mentioned by the lecturer, point to the absence of true chlorophyll. With reference to monotropa, Dr. Baptie held that it was not parasitic, or that at least there was no evidence of parasitism, and he thought that the intermediary stage suggested by Mr. Fletcher, had as yet no grounds for acceptance. No connection of monotropa with the roots of any plant had yet been recorded, and no person had ever seen the underground root-growth which had been suggested. Mr. Fletcher in reply said it would be almost impossible for any one to observe this stage, on account of the growth being entirely underground, but he trusted attempts would be made to grow the plant from seed, and so definitely settle the question. Mr. R. B. Whyte supported the idea that the plants mentioned were in a greater or less degree parasitic, according as they showed the presence or absence of chlorophyll. A short discussion then followed on the paper which had been read by Mr. Ami, chiefly with reference to the prospects of natural gas being found near Ottawa in quantities available for economic purposes. Mr. J. Stewart, Rev. Prof. Marsan, Prof. Macoun and Mr. Harrington joined in this discussion, as well as Mr. Ami. A fine series of the parasitic plants mentioned in Mr. Fletcher's paper was exhibited by Prof. Macoun.