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SCIENCE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

OF LONDON.

PART I.

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Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart. in the Chair.

The Report on the animals for the importation of which the Council should be recommended to take measures (prepared in pursuance of a Resolution of the Committee, Jan. 11.), was presented and read by Mr. Vigors. It was directed that it should be suspended in the Meeting Room for the consideration of the Members of the Committee until the next Meeting, to which it should be again submitted, and its adoption be recommended.

An extract was read from the 'Lecture faite à la 1ère Séance Annuelle de la Société d'Histoire Naturelle de l'Isle Maurice, 24 Aout, 1830, par M. Julien Desjardins, Sécretaire de la Société,' a manuscript copy of which had been transmitted by that Society.

The zoological labours of the Mauritius Natural History Society have, during the first year of its existence, embraced numerous departments of animated nature.

The *Mammalia* of the island have been treated of by M. J. Desjardins. They are twenty-six in number, of which twelve only exist in the wild state. These are enumerated as the *Simia Aygula*, L.; *Pteropus vulgaris*; *Pter. rubricollis*, Geoff.; *Nyctinomus acetabulosus*, Geoff.; *Taphozous Mauritianus*, Geoff.; *Erinaceus setosus*, L.; *Sorex Indicus*, Geoff.; *Mus Rattus*, L.; *Mus Musculus*, L.; *Lepus nigricollis*; *Sus scrofa*, L.; and *Cervus Elaphus*, L.

Various *Birds* of Mauritius have been brought before the Society, including the *Fulica Chloropus*, L.; the *Numenius Madagascariensis*, Briss.; and a *Snipe*, known in the island as the *Cul blanc*. To the latter M. L. Desjardins has given, with some doubts, the name of *Scolopax Mauritiana*.

Several birds from Madagascar have also occupied the attention of the Society, and M. J. Desjardins has identified them as follows: two species of *Falco*, Cuv.; *Strix flammea*, L.; *Loxia Madagascariensis*, L.; *Corvus Dauricus*, Lath.; a species of *Regulus*, Cuv.; *Cuculus canorus*, L.; *Tetrao Coturnix*, L.; *Scopus Umbretta*; *Rallus Madagascariensis*, n. s.; *Fulica Chloropus*, L.; *Fulica cristata*, Gmel.; *Scolopax Capensis*, L.; *Colymbus minor*, L.; and four species of the genus *Anas*, L.

There are very few *Reptiles* met with on the island. An instance has occurred of the discovery of a living *Snake*, the second within the memory of the inhabitants. It was the *Coluber rufus*, LaCép.; and had probably been brought from India in some ship. The earlier travellers speak of the existence of *Tortoises*, but none are ~~now~~ found. M. J. Desjardins has, however, discovered three deposits of the remains of these animals, all of which are evidently of modern date, their age not exceeding two or three centuries. There are two

Saurian Reptiles, which, although common, remained undescribed until M. L. Desjardins gave to them the names of *Scincus Telfairii* and *Scinc. Bojerii:* he has also described a third, smaller and much more uncommon than the others, the *Scinc. Boutonii.*

Three new species of *Fishes* have been described and figured by M. T. Delisse. They are a *Heniochus*, Cuv.; a *Holacanthus*, Cuv.; and an *Ophidium*, L.

In *invertebrated animals*, especially those which inhabit the sea, Mauritius is rich. Among the *Annelida*, M. Liénard, sen. has described an *Amphitrite*, which he believes to be new: he has also described the *Amph. voluticornis* and *Amph. splendida*, Lam., together with three new species, the *Amph. fuscata, albicans*, and *tricolor*. A lacustrine *Erpobdella* has been described by M. L. Desjardins, who has preserved to it the trivial name of *sex-lineata*, doubtingly given by MM. Quoy and Gaimard. Three new species of *Crustacea*, of the genera *Lupa, Plagusia*, and *Cancer*, have been described by M. Liénard, jun.: and M. De Lisse, sen., has proposed to regard as the type of a new genus the *Homard sans cornes* of the fishermen; to this group he gives the name of *Scyllibacus*, and places it between *Scyllarus*, Fab. and *Ibacus*, Pér. The species is named *Scyllibacus orientalis.*

Many *Insects* have been exhibited at the meetings of the Society, and M. J. Desjardins has read a description and history of the metamorphoses of the *Coccinella sulphurea*, Oliv. Among the *Cirrhipeda* a new species of *Pentalasmis*, allied to *Pent. striata*, Leach, has been described by M. Desjardins under the name of *Anatifa Mauritiana.*

The *Radiata* which have been described, are a species of *Fistularia*, Lam., and a new species of *Cephea*, the *Ceph. lamellosa*, so named by M. Liénard, jun. on account of the foliaceous *lamellæ* which cover the under surface of its arms.

Among the *Mollusca*, six species of *Doris* have been described by M. Liénard, sen., to one of which, regarded by him as new, he has given the name of *Dor. marginata.* The same gentleman has also described a *Pleurobranchus.* M. Liénard, jun. has described another species of *Doris*, and has given a description of a *Dolabella*, with an account of its anatomy.

Such is a brief outline of the zoological labours of the Mauritius Natural History Society, which within the short period of its existence has received no less than fifty memoirs, descriptions, and notices on different branches of natural science.

At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Martin read his notes of the dissection of a specimen of the *Testudo Indica*, L., which recently died at the Society's Gardens.

The animal was of large size, although considerably less than one formerly in the possession of the Society, the dissection of which, by Mr. Yarrell, has been published in the Zoological Journal. The *carapace* or dorsal shell measured 2 feet 11 inches in length, and the *plastron* or ventral shell 2 feet 4 inches. The breadth was 1 foot 9 inches.

The length of the stomach was 2 feet; the circumference in the

largest part 1 foot 3 inches; its shape a flattened oval, contracting gradually towards the *pylorus*. On opening it, the coats, and especially the middle or muscular, were found extremely thick and firm, and increasing in thickness towards the *pylorus*, which protruded in a singular manner, to the distance of nearly an inch into the *duodenum*, at which part a few longitudinal *rugæ* were observed, the rest of the lining membrane being perfectly smooth. It contained a little fluid only. The liver presented nothing remarkable; it consisted of two principal lobes, in the right of which the gall-bladder was buried, so as just to show itself; the length of the gall-bladder was 2 inches.

The small intestines were thick and firm, their length being 3 feet 6 inches. The gall-duct enters the *duodenum* 3 inches, and the pancreatic duct 10 inches, below the pyloric orifice. On laying open the small intestines, their lining membrane appeared corrugated with numerous longitudinal *rugæ*, and they were found perfectly empty.

The large intestines were smooth on their internal surface, and filled with an immense mass of condensed vegetable matter, which was green and fibrous, and appeared to have only partially undergone the process of digestion. In the *colon* near the entrance of the small intestines were two or three small black patches, seemingly gangrenous. There was no *cæcum*. The circumference of the *colon* measured 9 inches. The length of the large intestines was 6 feet 8 inches, exclusive of the *cloaca*, which was 1 foot.

At the lower part of the *abdomen*, (in a singular cavity, formed by a diaphragm-like expansion of *peritoneum*, from which, to the opposite or extreme side, passed numerous bands, bearing a resemblance to the *chordæ tendineæ*,) the urinary bladder, of enormous capacity, was lying loose, irregularly folded, but containing a considerable quantity of viscid fluid: its *parietes* were thin, but very fibrous in texture. When moderately distended with air, its shape was made manifest, as trilobed, or rather, as consisting of one large central bag, from each side of which, a conical process jutted out; the extent from point to point being 1 foot 10 inches. It opened by a neck of about 3 inches in length, and closely invested with lung, into the *cloaca*, about 6 inches from its termination; the *penis* was long and deeply furrowed, and the *glans* large at the base, with a pointed *apex*.

The lungs were very florid in colour, and extremely light, spongy, and cellular, the cells being large and distinct. They extended the whole length of the *carapace*.

The kidneys were situated at the back of the *abdomen*, in shape oval; flat on one side, convex on the other; about 5 inches long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, and consisting of numerous lobes, which gave to their surface a furrowed or brain-like appearance; the relative proportion of the venous ramification in them was found to exceed that of the arterial.

As regards the death of the animal, nothing positive could be determined; but it appeared to Mr. Martin, from the black patches about the *colon*, and the quantity of undigested matter in the large intestines, to have resulted principally from an unnatural accumulation of fæcal matter, and the attending evil consequences.