

ART. XXXII.—Notes upon certain recently-described New Genera and Species of Coleoptera, from Canterbury, New Zealand.

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By the last mail I received from Mr. H. W. Bates, the well-known South American traveller and vice-president of the Entomological Society of London, a letter containing some valuable information respecting a few Coleoptera which I forwarded to him from this Province in October last. I give the greater part of it *verbatim*, and exhibit specimens of the new species referred to, which I shall afterwards place in the Museum. Mr. Bates writes as follows :—

“ I distributed the Coleoptera which you kindly sent me in the little box, amongst a number of entomologists especially devoted to the various groups, telling them to keep the specimens in exchange for the names. After much delay I have got replies from all of them, but there still remain a few species of which no one knows anything. The result is on the adjoining page. They are all (myself included) willing to describe the new species, but all say it is very requisite to have several specimens and both sexes to do this satisfactorily. You will get finer things and more species from the hilly districts. You will observe the large amount of new species, and even of new genera ; this shows what a fine new field you have. I saw Mr. Scott, and he told me he was willing to undertake your Hemiptera. Mr. Verrall, secretary to the Entomological Society, is willing to describe your Diptera.”

“ LIST OF COLEOPTERA.

No.

2. *Demetriida picea* (Chaudoir). There are several pretty spotted species of this genus in New Zealand, very rare in collections here.
3. *Dicrochile*, n. sp. There appear to be several closely allied species of this pretty genus, which is distinguished by its bilobed labrum (upper lip).
4. *Pterostichus*. More specimens wanted.
5. New genus near *Cymbeba* (Pascoe). Family Heteromera.
7. *Xantholinus punctulatus*. English species imported.
8. *Aphodius granarius*. ” ”
9. *Cercyon flavipes*. ” ”
13. *Selenopalpus strigipennis* (White).
14. *Lemidia obscura* (Pascoe), n. sp.
15. *Ptinus fur*. English, imported.
16. *Titæna rugiceps* (F. Bates). Heteromera.

17. Two species under this number—*Stephanorhynchus colaspis*, n. sp. ;
and n. sp. (*Curculio*).
18. *Dryocora howittii* (Pascoe).
22. *Pericoptus*, n. sp. More wanted.
24. *Inophlæus villaris* (Pascoe), n. sp.
26. *Irenimus parilis*, nov. gen.
27. *Navomorpha*, n. sp. More wanted.
28. *Anemma fulvipes* (Pascoe), n. g., n. sp.
30. *Cilibe punctata* (F. Bates). Heteromera.
31. *Cyttalia*, n. sp.
32. *Ceresium*, n. sp. More wanted.
33. *Cilibe thoracica* (F. Bates). Heteromera.
34. *Odontria*, n. sp. More wanted."

The above is only a preliminary note, and the descriptions, with (I hope) figures, have yet to arrive ; still, I think, the information contained in it considerably advances our knowledge of the entomology of New Zealand. We are now able to ascertain with very tolerable accuracy the names of fifteen species of Coleoptera previously unknown to anyone in the colony ; and have learnt to which genera at least five more species belong. It is interesting to note that four species, viz., *Xantholinus punctulatus*, *Aphodius granarius*, *Cercyon flavipes*, and *Ptinus fur*, are identical with those of England, and have, doubtless, been imported from thence. *Aphodius* and *Cercyon* confine themselves exclusively to the dung of animals, and could hardly, therefore, have existed in New Zealand previous to its colonization. I first observed *Aphodius* in this Province about seven years ago. It was then very scarce, and I could only procure a couple of specimens for my collection. Last spring it was quite as numerous upon our roads as any of the allied species are in Europe. I never saw *Cercyon* before last year, but it is now as abundant as the other.

In a former paper I noticed the occurrence of *Onthophagus granulatus* in Nelson, and, as time passes, it will be curious to observe whether any of the larger coprophagous Beetles, such as *Ateuchus*, *Copris*, or *Geotrupes*, find their way to these islands. I may remark that all Beetles of this family are desirable colonists. The same cannot be said of *Ptinus fur*, which is a well-known pest in the Museums of Europe, and even here we have had some experience of its destructive propensities.

The largest and most remarkable of the new species is the *Pericoptus*, and I look upon the thorough investigation of its habits as one of the most interesting problems in our natural history ; but I am still very much in the dark respecting it.

The new genus allied to *Cymbeba* is noteworthy as showing how very little has hitherto been done towards the classification of our insects, for this is one

of the commonest Beetles in the neighbourhood of Christchurch, and yet it proves to be not only a new species but a new genus. The same remark will apply almost equally well to *Irenimus* and *Cyttalia*, the latter of which is very common in spring upon the "Spaniard."

The *Ceresium*, too, is anything but rare on the Peninsula, and, altogether, I have been astonished to find how many new genera and species are contained in this very small collection of Beetles.

It will be seen that the thirty-four species referred to were divided amongst three or four of the best entomologists in London, and that eleven of them remain undetermined. From this we may form some idea of the difficulty of the task, which I consider to be one that could not be properly performed in the colony. The temptation to describe our own species is, of course, obvious, since, by the etiquette of science, and indeed by the necessity of the case, it is the describer, and not the discoverer, who obtains the credit of introducing a new species; but in the present state of knowledge no one man could well undertake more than a single group of insects. Until, therefore, science shall have been much more widely cultivated in New Zealand, reference to Europe will be absolutely indispensable, and, in spite of the delays, disappointments, and expense attendant upon such a course, I am encouraged to persevere in it by the result of Mr. Bates' letter. But, in order that we may reap the full benefit of the labours of English naturalists, it is necessary that all descriptions of New Zealand animals published in the scientific periodicals of Europe should be at once reprinted in our "Transactions." I am convinced that the funds at the disposal of the Institute could not be applied to any better purpose, and I think that the general rule—prohibiting the printing of any but original matter—might be advantageously dispensed with in this instance. At present I have a most elaborate and painstaking pamphlet on the New Zealand Trichoptera, by Mr. M'Lachlan, but, so far as the scientific public of these islands are concerned, it might almost as well be non-existent, for I do not believe that more than a couple of copies exist in the colony. I must, however, take this opportunity of expressing a hope that no one will forward insects to England without stipulating that a specimen of each new species, with name and description attached, be returned to us here. Much mischief and confusion has, undoubtedly, arisen from the indiscriminate despatch of specimens of natural history to Europe.

In conclusion, I may mention that I have lately forwarded a considerable number of Coleoptera, Neuroptera, and Hemiptera, to Messrs. Bates, Scott, and M'Lachlan, and, with their kind assistance, I hope shortly to be able to introduce something like order into the chaos of New Zealand entomology.