

letter was read from Surgeon-General George Bidie, C.M.Z.S., referring to a case of the breeding of the Elephant in captivity. — Prof. Bell made some observations on the "British Marine Area", as proposed to be defined by the Committee of the British Association. Prof. Bell opposed the idea of omitting the Channel Islands from the British area. — Prof. A. Newton, F.R.S., exhibited (on behalf of Mr. W. Eagle Clarke) a specimen of Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria columbina*), believed to have been picked up dead in Yorkshire. — Mr. H. E. Dresser exhibited (on behalf of Lord Lilford) specimens of a new species of Titmouse allied to the Marsh-Tit (*Parus ater*), obtained by Dr. Guillemard in Cyprus, which he proposed to designate *Parus cypristes*. — Mr. Boulenger exhibited a living specimen of a rare African Batrachian (*Xenopus laevis*), which had been sent to him by Mr. Leslie, F.Z.S., of Port Elizabeth. — Prof. Flower exhibited a photograph of a specimen of Rudolphi's Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), taken in October last, in the Thames near Tilbury. — Mr. G. A. Boulenger, F.Z.S., read an account of the Reptiles and Batrachians collected by Mr. H. H. Johnston on the Rio del Rey, West Africa. Amongst these were examples of two species of Batrachians new to science. — Mr. Edgar A. Smith read some notes on three Species of Shells obtained by Mr. H. H. Johnston at the Rio del Rey, Cameroons. — Mr. A. G. Butler, F.L.S., read a paper containing an account of two small Collections of African Lepidoptera obtained by Mr. H. H. Johnston at the Cameroons and the Rio del Rey. — A communication was read from Mr. G. E. Dobson, F.R.S., on the genus *Myosorex*. The paper contained the description of a new species from the Rio del Rey (Cameroons) district, which he proposed to call *Myosorex Johnstoni*, after Mr. H. H. Johnston, who had sent home the specimens. — Mr. G. A. Boulenger gave the description of a new species of *Hyla* from Port Hamilton, Corea, living in the Society's Gardens, which he proposed to name *Hyla stepheni*, after its discoverer. — P. L. Sclater, Secretary.

## 2. Linnean Society of London.

17<sup>th</sup> November, 1887. — There was exhibited for Surg. Gen. Bidie of Madras a photograph of the Indian Elephant in coitu, taken at Thayetmys, Burmah. This disposes of the traditional statements of the old traveller De Varthema and others as to the unusual position in the act of copulation which in fact as is shown by the photograph is as in other Pachyderms. — A paper was read by Mr. Patrick Geddes, on certain Factors of Variation in Plants and Animals. In this part of the memoir he more especially dealt with plants and the shortening of the axes in leaf and flower etc. According to him the origin of species is to be found in soil and climate on the one hand, and in a more or less distinct ebbing of the vegetative activities back from the growing point. Modification by descent is seen to take place along a definite line of change within which the action of natural selection can at best somewhat accelerate its journey, when it does not actually retard or exterminate it. — There followed a communication on the Copepoda of Madeira and the Canary Islands, with descriptions of new genera and species of Mr. Isaac C. Thompson. Sixty five species in all were obtained. Of these six are new to science and three are possibly of generic significance. Of the total number twenty three are known in British Waters, and of these fourteen belong to

the family *Harpacticidae*. The material from the various islands shows considerable identity of species obtained but their numbers vary greatly in the different islands.

1<sup>st</sup> Dec., 1887. — There was exhibited for Mr. O. Fraser of Calcutta a specimen of a supposed weather worn seed of a palm, picked up on the Madras Coast. Opinions given referred it to the consolidated roe of a fish, doubts being thrown on its vegetable nature. — Sir John Lubbock read a paper in continuation of his previous memoirs, on „The Habits of Ants, Bees, and Wasps“. He said that it was generally stated that our English slave-making ant (*Formica sanguinea*), far from being entirely dependent on their slaves, as was the case with *Polyergus rufescens*, the slave-making ant „par excellence“, was really able to live alone, and that the slaves were only, so to say, a luxury. Some of his observations appeared to throw doubt on this. In one of his nests the ants were prevented from making any fresh capture of slaves. Under these circumstances, the number of slaves gradually diminished, and at length the last died. At that time there were some 50 of the mistresses still remaining. These, however, rapidly died off, until at the end of June, 1886, there were only six remaining. He then placed near the door of the nest some pupæ of *Formica fusca*, the slave ant. These were at once carried in, and soon came to maturity. The mortality among the mistresses at once ceased, and from that day to this only two more have died. This seems to show that the slaves perform some indispensable function in the nest, though what that is still remains to be discovered. As regards the longevity of ants, he mentioned that the old queen ant, which had more than once been mentioned to the Society, was still alive. She must now be fourteen years old, and still laid fertile eggs; to the important physiological bearing of which fact he called special attention. He discussed the observations and remarks of Graber as regards the senses of ants, with special reference to their sensibility towards the ultra violet rays, and referred to the observations of Forel, which confirmed those he had previously laid before the Society. Professor Graber had also questioned some of his experiments with reference to smell. He, however, maintained the accuracy of his observations, and pointed out that Graber had overlooked some of the precautions which he had taken; his experiments seemed to leave no doubt as to the existence of a delicate sense of smell among ants. As regards the recognition of friends, he repeated some previous experiments with the same results. He took some pupæ from one of his nests (A) and placed these under charge of some ants from another nest (B) of the same species. After they had come to maturity he placed some in nest A and some in nest B. Those placed in their own nest were received amicably, those in the nests of their nurses were attacked and driven out. This showed that the recognition is not by the means of a sign or password, for in that case they would have been recognised in nest B and not in nest A. Dr. Wassmann had confirmed his observations in opposition to the statement of Lespès, that white ants are enemies to those of another nest, even belonging to the same species; the domestic animals, on the other hand, can be transferred from one nest to another, and will be amicably received. In conclusion, he discussed the respective functions of the eyes and ocelli, and referred to several other observations on various interesting points in the economy of the Social Hymenoptera. — J. Murie.

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