

In July last I had a large specimen of *Ixodes* brought me, taken from off a West Indian tortoise. I put it into a pill-box, and having left home for a few weeks in the autumn, it was completely forgotten. Last month however (November) I happened to open the box, when I found the specimen still alive, though languid and shrivelled in appearance, accompanied by a strange-looking mass larger than itself, which upon examination proved to be an immense number of orange-coloured eggs, resembling a portion of the roe of a fish, but more minute in structure. This day I found the parent dead, but the eggs I think appear to have increased in size; whether they are likely to produce any young is still to be seen. At the lowest calculation the animal had lived four months without food.

My second is an instance either of affection or loyalty, I cannot tell which. In one of my colonies of ants, a small black one, the queen (which is as large as six of the workers at least), died a fortnight since from some cause, and lies in one of the passages of the formicary. But up to this day there has been constantly several workers attending her remains, occasionally touching her with their antennæ and striking her with their heads (an action common with this species of ant on meeting each other, which I have not observed in any other families). A few days since I poured some water into the nest, to see if it would cause the guards to forsake their charge, as water generally causes a dispersion when it suddenly enters their passages; but in this instance, although it threw them into some confusion, they would not leave the body of their queen. Is this affection?

I remain, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

HENRY DENNY.

Richard Taylor, Esq.

NOTE ON THE INSECTS OF MADEIRA.

We make the following extract, by permission of Mr. W. Thomson of King's College, from a private letter addressed to him from Madeira by our correspondent, T. V. Wollaston, Esq., of Jesus College, Cambridge:—

“The country here is most glorious; mountains rising 7000 feet towards the moon, and Funchal at the bottom of them, ‘looking at itself’ in the sea: the intermediate space filled up with wood and rock, and for the last 1000 feet with vineyards arranged on terraces and the country-houses of the ‘aristocracy’ of Funchal. The vegetation is grand to an excess: grapes, oranges, bananas, figs, pumpkins, guavas and prickly pears in actual profusion, with geraniums, cacti, fuchsias, myrtles, cassias and heliotropes spread over the country like weeds. The hills are tremendous, involving the necessity of keeping a horse, which is sometimes ‘too large a specimen to be convenient’ in entomological researches. Insects are themselves scarce here; so I have been driven to collect all orders alike, and muster 230 species, or 970 specimens; and as I have been here only six weeks, this will at least show you that entomology is still cherished, though under adverse circumstances and many local disad-

vantages. I have been working chiefly at Coleoptera, Diptera and Hemiptera, and find them more abundant than the other orders. *At present* (25th Nov. 1847) my numbers stand thus: Coleoptera, 87 species; Diptera, 43 species; Hemiptera, 39 species; Hymenoptera, 25 species; Lepidoptera, 20 species; miscellaneous, 16 species."

This is certainly far above any published list of the insects of Madeira, and we have no doubt that our talented correspondent, Mr. Wollaston, of Jesus College, Cambridge, when less of an invalid, will add much to it. As it is, it will doubtless prove interesting to the entomologists who read this Journal.—A. W.

CURIOUS PHÆNOMENA IN THE NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS, &c.

Highgate, 11th Dec. 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,—Two days ago a remarkable circumstance occurred in my greenhouse, which it may be interesting to you to communicate. The *Night-blooming Cereus*, of which I gave you a cutting, has long had a bud. Being a fine strong plant, it has been able to mature it even at this unusual season. It arrived at maturity on *Thursday*. The days however not being of the length usual at its ordinary season, it seems to have been somewhat puzzled how to bloom. When I entered my greenhouse at 8 A.M. I found all the petals on *one side* expanded [left side]. I thought this remarkable, but conceived that, in this dull weather, a longer effort at opening was necessary than usual. I watched it all day, but was surprised to find no advance. At 8 P.M. I went into my greenhouse for the express purpose of examining the bloom, when, to my great surprise, I found that *all the petals which had opened in the morning were closed up*, while all the petals of the *opposite* [right] side were then *fully expanded*! The left petals remained closed. The bud was a full-sized and healthy one. [The seed promises to mature. 27th December.]

It is obvious, I take it then, that the law which regulates the opening of these flowers, and which normally causes them to bloom at *night* only, and *for* [say] *twelve hours* only, affects the *individual* petals and not the totality of the bloom. Hence if, from any accident, as here, any number of petals mistake a dull day for the night, and open, their doom is sealed: they have begun their twelve hours' race, and can see it—and *no more*; and their more knowing companions, who keep closed till true night, must flourish alone in their glory,—but *will* do it, independent of the prior blooming and present decay of their companions.

I have often noticed that if the *Echinocactus Eyriesii* (a remarkably rapid bloomer) advances to the point of opening near morning, it remains in that exact state all the day, checked by the light, and does not begin to burst till the sun is going down.

While on vegetable life I have another curious matter to notice. In the 'Annals,' vol. xix. p. 470, is an article on "Monstrous Roses." A far more remarkable circumstance than any noticed there, or than I ever saw noticed, occurred in my own garden in the same year as the monsters there recorded, and in a plant of the same na-



White, Adam. 1848. "Note on the insects of Madeira." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 1, 76–77.

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