27. *Primitia muta*, nov.

Cytheropsis concinna?, ibid. p. 254, pl. 9. fig. 3.

Oblong-ovate, nearly *Leperditia*-shaped; back straight, ends rounded but unequal; ventral edge convex; surface smooth. Though resembling *P. concinna* at first sight, it is less cylindrical, broader at the obliquely rounded end, and its ventral dge is more symmetrically curved: it is near to *P. rugulifera* in shape. From the Upper Silurian Limestone of Beechey Island, with *P. rugulifera*, *P. sigillata*, *Beyrichia clathrata*, *B. plagosa*, and *Leperditia gibbera*.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIII.

[The figures are magnified about 20 diameters.]

Fig. 1. *Primitia cristata*, J. & H.: *a*, carapace, view of right valve; *b*, posterior view; *c*, dorsal view.
Fig. 2. *P. umbilicata*, J. & H.: *a*, left side of carapace; *b*, dorsal view; *c*, ventral view; *d*, inside of valve (filled with matrix).
Fig. 3. *P. tersa*, J. & H.: *a*, carapace, side view; *b*, dorsal view; *c*, ventral view.
Fig. 4. *P. trigonalis*, J. & H.: *a*, carapace, view of left valve; *b*, dorsal view.
Fig. 5. *P. renulina*, J. & H.: *a*, carapace, side view; *b*, dorsal view.
Fig. 6. *P. variolata*, J. & H.: *a*, left valve; *b*, its edge-view; *c*, right valve of var. *paucipunctata*; *d*, its edge view.
Fig. 7. *P. matutina*, J. & H.: *a*, right valve; *b*, its edge view.
Fig. 8. *P. Roemeriana*, J. & H.: *a*, carapace, side view (left valve); *b*, profile.
Fig. 9. *P. Beyrichiana*, J. & H., right valve.
Fig. 10. *P. semicircularis*, J. & H.: *a*, left valve; *b*, its end view; *c*, ventral edge.
Fig. 11. *P. pusilla*, J. & H.: *a*, right valve; *b*, its edge view.
Fig. 12. *P. obsoleta*, J. & H.: *a*, right valve; *b*, its end view; *c*, edge view (ventral).
Fig. 13. *P. ovata*, J. & H.: *a*, right valve; *b*, its end view; *c*, edge view (ventral).
Fig. 14. *P. oblonga*, J. & H.: *a*, right (?) valve; *b*, its end view; *c*, edge view (ventral).

XLVIII.—*On the Names of the Genus* Mystomys. (In a Letter to Professor Allman.) By Dr. J. E. Gray, F.R.S., V.P.Z.S., F.L.S. &c.

British Museum, Nov. 15, 1865.

Dear Professor Allman,

As I have been informed that, in your paper on the animal that Du Chaillu noticed as *Cynogale velox*, you persist in retaining the generic name of *Potamogale*, I venture to send you the following observations, in the hope that I may induce you to reconsider the question, and avoid adding another to the several useless names which the animal has already received.

I did hope that I had clearly explained why I rejected that name in my paper in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for July 1861, vol. viii. p. 62.

M. du Chaillu's description of the *Cynogale velox* is so incorrect that, if the skin had not fortunately come into the possession of the British Museum, the animal must have remained, like the genus of Bats proposed by Bowdich because his specimen had a large *Acarus* affixed inside of the ears, one of the puzzles of zoologists.

M. Du Chaillu observes:—"*Cynogale velox*. This resembles the Asiatic *Cynogale Bennettii*, Gray. I have now nothing but the skin of the animal, the skull having been destroyed by fire. The teeth resemble those of the above genus of Gray, as well as the general appearance; but the size of the animal, the length and character of the tail, and the habitat indicate a distinct species." Then follow the description and some observations on its habits, which are succeeded by the following remarks:—"Only a single species of *Cynogale* being described, and that a native of Asia, I thought the different shape and proportion of the tail, with its African habitat, were sufficient to make this the representative of a different genus, for which I proposed the name of *Potamogale*, preferring, however, to wait until I can procure the skull and skeleton. I have placed it with the genus *Cynogale*, to which it certainly bears a close resemblance."

This is all that M. du Chaillu says upon the question. Is such a general observation sufficient to establish a genus, more especially when the animal described has not the slightest resemblance, either in external form, character of feet and claws, or in dental character, to the animal with which it is compared? I need not say that the teeth have not the slightest resemblance to those of *Cynogale*, though he says he had the skull, but it was destroyed—and that the extremities can scarcely be called "small, the first joint enclosed within the skin of the body," and the *fore claws* are not "very slightly if at all webbed," nor are the "*hind claws* partially webbed." With such a description you had every excuse for believing that your animal was an "entirely new genus," as you did when you first spoke to me about it, before you were shown Du Chaillu's skin of *Cynogale velox* in the British Museum.

I can only repeat what I said in the paper before referred to, "As M. du Chaillu has not characterized his genus *Potamogale*, and as he has given such an erroneous description of the feet of the specimen that no one could recognize it, I do not think that his name has any reason to be retained," more especially as in one place he gives the same reason for considering it a species of *Cynogale* which he gives in another for thinking that it may be a different genus.

If the name *Potamogale* is to be used, it must by every just naturalist be quoted as *Potamogale*, Allman, as you have characterized the genus, and Du Chaillu has not done so. This would be all well, if the genus had not already been characterized, as far as the materials at command would allow, and in a manner which can leave no doubt of the identity of the animal, as it is the only one which has the characters assigned to it.

If the rules of nomenclature are rigidly adhered to, you are in an untoward dilemma yourself; but I cannot believe that can have any influence on you on this occasion. The paper in which you established and characterized the genus *Potamogale* was read several months ago; but there was no abstract of the paper including the character of the genus printed in the 'Proceedings,' and the account of the genus which is to appear in the 'Transactions' of the Society has not been published yet, and may not appear probably until the end of the year; so in fact your character of the genus has not been published even yet.

In the meantime Dr. Barboza du Bocage has read a paper in which he has described and figured the teeth, and established for it a genus under the name *Bayonia*. This paper was published in the second part of the 'Proceedings' for the year 1865, p. 401, and therefore it must have priority. The synonyma of the genus will stand thus:—

1. *Cynogale*, part, Du Chaillu, 1860.
2. *Mystomys*, Gray, Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 1861, p. 63.
3. *Bayonia*, Dr. Barboza du Bocage, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1865.
4. *Potamogale*, Allman, Trans. Zool. Soc. ined. 1865 or 1866.

From the form of the feet and tail, and also from the similarity of the fur to that of *Castor* and *Fiber*, I observed that "I suspect that it is a Glirine animal, much more nearly allied to *Fiber*, *Hydromys*, and *Castor* than to any ferine genus." This has turned out to be an unfortunate suspicion, the fur being as like that of the aquatic Insectivore *Galemys*, which did not at the instant occur to me, as it is to that of the aquatic *Glires*.

From this observation I have been accused of referring the genus to *Glires**. Perhaps the name I adopted may have had something to do with this mistake; I only said "I suspect" it might be one. But I used the Greek for Mouse as we use it in English: thus we call a Bat Fluttermouse, a Marsupial Opossum Mouse, and, more bearing on the question, several Insectivores Shrewmouse, Elephant Mouse, Hopping-mouse, and Musk-rat; and no one that I am aware of has objected to the names of *Hylomys*, Temm. (a Mole), *Echinomys*, Licht. (the Elephant Shrew), and especially *Myogale* or *Myogalea* or

* "M. Gray pour un Rongeur," Proc. Zool. Soc. 1865, p. 402.

Galemys for the Musk-rat, a genus very nearly allied, as is now proved, to *Mystomys*; and the animal is quite as much allied to a Mouse or Rat as it is to a Weasel, which the name *Potamogale* implies. Both the names, if strictly interpreted, have the objection that Fabricius so forcibly put against the use of generic names having a signification, which has so frequently induced me to use names which it is the fashion of some to call barbarous, though they appear to me much less barbarous than many of the sesquipedalian Greek names which some of these purists have given to the genera they have described.

I see in M. Bocage's paper that he quotes "*Potamogale velox*, Du Chaillu, Journ. N. H. Soc. of Boston, 1860, p. 361." But no such combination of words is to be found in that work at the page quoted, or in any other that I can find, not even in the index.

Therefore your adoption of this name is only adding another to the superabundant names that have been applied to this animal.

I can only hope that you will reconsider the question. No one is more desirous than I am that every one should have his due claim for priority of description properly considered; but I cannot but believe that in the interest of science one is called on to resist the adoption of names given, as *Potamogale* was, without any character, and with particulars that were only fitted to mislead the student.

I am, my dear Professor,
Yours sincerely,
JOHN EDWARD GRAY.

XLIX.—*Descriptions of new Species of Shells.*

By E. VON MARTENS, M.D.

1. *Paludina purpurea.*

P. testa conico-globosa, obtecte perforata, solidula, lineis spiralibus elevatis subtilibus numerosis sculpta, rufo-fusca, non fasciata; spira convexe conoidea; anfr. 5, convexi, sutura mediocriter profunda divisi; apertura vix obliqua, subcircularis, *superne rotundata*, non angulata, *intus purpurea*; peristoma interruptum, rectum.

Alt. 25, diameter major 22, minor 17, aperturæ alt. 15, lat. 12½ mill.

Australia, Murray River. The specimens in the Berlin Zoological Museum were received from Mr. Krefft.

In young specimens a narrow umbilicus is to be seen, which is shut up in the full-grown by the inner lip; the upper two whorls are worn off in the last. I am not aware of any species closely resembling it.