

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.

(SESSION 1896-97.)

November 5th, 1896.

Dr. ALBERT GÜNTHER, F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Messrs. Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, C.B., and William Tyson were elected, and Messrs. Vernon H. Blackman and Percy Groom were admitted Fellows of the Society.

Dr. Morris, C.M.G., exhibited specimens and slides illustrating the occurrence of raphides in the bulbs of the common Hyacinth of gardens (*Hyacinthus orientalis* and varieties). Forms of eczema were said to have been produced in persons handling and cleaning these bulbs. Although the fact was familiar to gardeners, the cause did not appear to have been clearly traced. Experiments and observations at the Jodrell Laboratory at Kew had shown that both dry and moist scales were capable of producing considerable irritation in certain cases when applied directly to the skin. There was little doubt that the raphides were the prime agents. These needle-shaped crystals (composed of oxalate of lime) varied from $\frac{1}{100}$ th to $\frac{1}{200}$ th of an inch in length, and were arranged in close bundles, easily dispersed by rubbing the dry scales. In the growing plants they were doubtless protective, as snails, for instance, avoided hyacinth bulbs but attacked others growing close by. Roman hyacinths (var. *albulus*) were understood to cause greater irritation than other varieties.

Dr. D. H. Scott described some experiments which he had tried, tending to confirm the conclusion that the irritation of the

skin produced by contact with the bulb-scales of Hyacinths is due immediately to puncture by the numerous raphides.

On behalf of Dr. H. B. Hewetson of Leeds, Mr. Harting exhibited a photograph of a specimen of Macqueen's Bustard (*Otis Macqueeni*) which had been shot at Easington, in Holderness, on the 17th October last, and gave a brief account of the species, which had now been met with in England for the third time; its first occurrence having been noticed in Lincolnshire in Oct. 1847, and the second in Yorkshire in Oct. 1892.

Mr. Hugh Warrant exhibited a remarkable bird which was believed at first to be a hybrid between the Red Grouse and Ptarmigan, but which in the opinion of Mr. Ogilvie Grant, Mr. Millais, and Mr. Harting, could only be regarded as an abnormally pale-coloured Grouse. Only one possible instance had been recorded of such a hybrid as was suggested, viz. in the case of a bird which was exhibited some years ago by Prof. Newton to the Zoological Society (P. Z. S. 1878, p. 793), and had since been figured by Mr. Millais in his work on Game Birds.

A specimen of the Cream-coloured Courser (*Cursorius isabellinus*), an extremely rare visitor to this country from North Africa (probably *viâ* Spain), which had been shot on Salisbury Plain, at Earlstoke, on the 10th October last, was exhibited by Mr. Harting, who gave particulars of the occurrence, and stated that another example of this bird had since been obtained in Boulay Bay, Jersey.

The following papers were read:—

1. "On Mediterranean Bryozoa." By Arthur William Waters, F.L.S.
2. "On some new Species of *Crassula* from South Africa." By Dr. S. Schönland, F.L.S.
3. "On the Holothurians of New Zealand." By Prof. A. Dendy, F.L.S.

November 19th, 1896.

Mr. A. D. MICHAEL, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Messrs. John Farrah and Albert Henry Pawson were elected Fellows of the Society.

Dr. D. Morris, C.M.G., exhibited from the Royal Gardens, Kew, the inflorescence of *Pterisanthes polita*, a singular species of the Ampelidæ, received in 1894 from Mr. H. N. Kidley, F.L.S., of Singapore, and now in flower for the first time in Europe. It is a slender plant, climbing 15 to 20 feet over trees, a native of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and North Borneo. The cordate leaves are entire and spinose; the tendrils