

ON A FRESH-WATER SPONGE FROM TASMANIA.

By

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Very few fresh-water sponges have been recorded from Australia—some nine or ten species in all, not one of which is Tasmanian.

The sponge referred to in the present note is apparently the only Tasmanian form yet obtained.

Its discovery was due primarily to the enthusiasm of F. A. Callaway, Esq., of Wynyard, who takes a keen interest in the natural history of his own district.

About a mile from the town of Wynyard, on the way to Flowerdale, the road is crossed by a small creek which flows into the River Inglis. The creek is here dammed for the purpose of driving the engines of the local flour mill. Just below the dam is a shaded pool, which is sometimes full of water, sometimes nearly dry, the water rippling over the rounded pebbles. This pool is quite a rich collecting ground.

Some years ago, when on a visit to the Wynyard district with Professor D. M. S. Watson, of the University College, London, our attention was directed to the possibilities of this spot by Mr. Callaway, who had collected there on previous occasions, and now informed us of the existence of a fresh-water sponge. A search among the pebbles yielded most interesting results. Not only did we find the pale-yellow incrustation of sponge, but we were lucky enough to chance upon a plentiful supply of the interesting fresh-water hydrozoan, *Cordylophora*, which also, as far as I know, has not been recorded from Tasmania. *Hydra* was also present in abundance.

Mr. Callaway, on a later occasion, forwarded me further specimens of the sponge, and these were sent to Dr. N. Annandale, of the Indian Biological Survey, to whom I am greatly indebted for their identification.

The sponge proves to be identical with *Ephydatia multi-formis*, Weltner, discovered by the German South-West Australian Expedition in Herdman's Lake, N.W. from Subiaco, Western Australia. It was described by Dr. W. Weltner as

a new species in "Die Fauna Südwest-Australiens," Bd. III., Lief. 5, and to this publication I would refer those who wish for further information as to its structure and affinities.

It is somewhat remarkable that this sponge should be recorded from collecting grounds so far apart, but it is in the highest degree probable that rigorous search will disclose its presence in intervening localities.

The discovery of this sponge, occurring as it does on the mainland and in Tasmania, adds another link to the chain of relationships which connects the fauna of this island with that of the continent (1). It may not be out of place to draw attention to the occurrence, in the same district of Tasmania, of the fresh-water crab, *Hymenosoma lacustris*, Chilton, originally found in New Zealand, and since recorded from the Australian continent, from Norfolk Island, and from Lord Howe Island (2).

I may perhaps hope that the publication of this short note may stimulate our young zoologists to the gathering of further species of this interesting, but, at present, little-known group of fresh-water invertebrates.

(1) An admirably clear and concise summary of the then existing knowledge of these relationships was given by Professor W. Baldwin Spencer in his Presidential Address to Section D, Biology, of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science at its Hobart meeting in 1892.

(2) See Professor Chas. Chilton, Pap. & Proc. Roy. Soc. Tas., 1919.