

except in the dark, when it contracted them if the light of a candle fell upon it. The power of fully withdrawing them seemed to be wanting. They were more than an inch in length when entirely displayed. The next day I perceived it lying in the angle at the bottom of the glass containing sea-water, enveloped in a glaucous semitransparent film of mucus looking like a stout spider's web, in which it moved as a worm moves in its case. It had expanded to a length of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, but on being touched immediately contracted so as to measure only $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch. It possessed the power of swelling out portions of the column; sometimes the swelling appeared near the middle of the body, sometimes near the base. On some occasions it lay with the lower part of the body bent into a hook; at others it quitted the protection of its tube and floated at the surface of the water. The animal was never observed to wriggle or glide through the water like a worm; all its motions were extremely slow. It was captured at the bottom of a pool in the rocks near Funchal.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WOODCUT, p. 304.

- Fig. 1. *Alicia mirabilis*, as seen with the base detached and uppermost, the tentacles lying on the bottom of the tank.
 Figs. 2 and 3. Two of the appendages of the column, of the natural size.
 Fig. 4. One of the warts of an appendage, enlarged. The outer coat is colourless and transparent; the top of the interior body is dull purplish, the lower part yellowish brown, and the interspace colourless.

November 12, 1861.

Dr. J. E. Gray, V.P., in the Chair.

Dr. P. L. Sclater exhibited a cast of the skull of the Aye-Aye (*Chiromys madagascariensis*), taken from a specimen in the possession of M. E. Verreaux, of Paris, the fourth example of this rare Mammal received in Europe.

Mr. S. Stevens exhibited a portion of the collection of birds recently forwarded by Mr. Wallace from Mysol and Waigiou, amongst which were many rare and interesting species.

The following extract from a letter addressed to the Secretary by Edward Blyth, Esq. (Corr. Memb.), dated Maulmein, May 10th, 1861, was read to the meeting:—

“I have made this day a grand discovery, which neither you nor others will believe in at the first announcement, but it is true nevertheless,—viz. that the extraordinary Rhinoceros-horn figured* as

* See P. Z. S. 1854, p. 250.

that of *Rhinoceros crossii* by Gray, in your 'Proceedings,' is the well-developed anterior horn of an old male *R. sumatranus*—the common species of these provinces. My host at this place is a great sportsman, and some noble trophies of the chase hang in his verandah; but what fixed my attention was the head of *R. sumatranus*, with a development of horns which I had never imagined to occur in this species; and the resemblance of the much-curved anterior horn to that of Gray's supposed species, *R. crossii*, struck me at once. Conversing with my host on the subject, he remarked that he took a similar head to England (where it now adorns his family hall), with the front horn at least 3 inches longer, and still more curved. A little reflection, and I felt satisfied that *R. crossii* must sink into a synonym of *R. sumatranus*."

In a subsequent communication Mr. Blyth remarked:—

"All doubts now removed about the identity of *R. sumatranus* and *R. crossii*. Mason states that the skin of the Tenasserim species 'is quite smooth, like a buffalo's'—meaning devoid of folds; but Col. Fyche assures me that the one he shot had the slight folds described and figured of *R. sumatranus*. The mature female horns are small, and the nasal bones comparatively narrow; I am not aware that a corresponding sexual difference occurs in any other Rhinoceros. In the Indian one-horned species the sexes are alike in size and development of horn."

The Secretary reported the return from the Cape, on the 1st instant, of the Society's collector, Mr. James Benstead, with a second collection of animals presented to the Society by His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B., the Governor of the Colony. The collection consisted of the following:—

MAMMALS.

1. A young male Hartebeest (*Antilope caama*).
2. A female Reh-bok (*Antilope capreola*).
3. A four-horned Sheep (*Ovis aries*, var.).
4. A male Ratel (*Mellivora ratel*).

BIRDS.

5. One male and two female Ostriches (*Struthio camelus*).
6. Three Stanley Cranes (*Grus paradisea*).
7. Two Jackal Buzzards (*Buteo jacal*).

The Hartebeest was of great interest, as having been only exhibited once before in the Society's collection. The Ostriches, being from the Cape, afforded an opportunity of comparing together the northern and southern birds, which had long been desired, and which would probably lead to their being distinguished as different local varieties, if not as species.