



PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL,

FOR JULY, 1899.

The Monthly General Meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday, the 5th July, 1899, at 9-15 P.M.

R. D. OLDHAM, Esq., F.G.S., in the Chair.

The following members were present:—

Major A. Alcock, I.M.S., Mr. J. J. Cotton, Mr. W. K. Dods, Mr. F. Finn, The Revd. W. K. Firminger, Major C. R. M. Green, I.M.S., Mr. T. H. Holland, The Revd. H. B. Hyde, Kumar Rameshwar Maliah, Mr. L. de Nicéville, Mr. J. D. Nimmo, Mahamahopadhaya Haraprasad Shastri, Mr. H. A. Stark, Dr. M. A. Stein, Major L. A. Waddell, I.M.S.

Visitor:—Mr. G. W. L. Caine.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Twenty-one presentations were announced.

Mr. A. Goodeve Chukerbutty has expressed a wish to withdraw from the Society.

Mr. F. Finn exhibited two living specimens of a new Indian species of Weaver-bird, and made the following remarks upon them:—

The birds I am exhibiting to-night were obtained about the end of June from Mr. W. Rutledge, of Entally, who states that he received them, together with a specimen of the Blue Rock Thrush (*Petrophila cyanus*) recently, from Naini Tal. The man from whom he procured the birds stated that he could get others, so that the species is probably not uncommon. I have no hesitation in describing it as new, as it differs markedly from any of our Indian Weavers, and does not agree either with the description of any of the allied African forms to which I have access. I have much pleasure in naming this handsome novelty after Mr. Rutledge, whose services to Indian Natural History, and to

the Museum and Zoological Gardens in particular, are so well known; and I characterize it as follows:—

Ploceus rutledgii, sp. nov.

Very similar to the male of *Ploceus baya* in breeding-plumage, but easily distinguishable by its larger size, and entirely yellow under surface.

Both specimens have the same coloration and are of about the same size, but as one has a stouter head and is brighter than the other, and constantly sings, it is possible that they are male and female and that the sexes will prove to be similar in this species. A full description, with a coloured plate, will hereafter appear in the Journal.

Major A. Alcock, I.M.S., exhibited a new species of Fish from the Deep Sea, and made the following remarks upon it:—

The fish exhibited to-night belongs to the subfamily *Triacanthinae* of the Plectognathous family *Sclerodermi*.

It has a short, moderately elevated, compressed body, covered with very small rough scales. The anterior bones of the head are produced to form a long, rather slender, perfectly tubular snout, some little distance from the end of which is the small transverse mouth-cleft. In each jaw is a distant series of very small conical teeth. There are two large spines in the first dorsal fin, and the ventral fins have the form of two long sharp spines that can be abducted to a right angle with the body and there fixed like a bayonet.

In form this fish has a considerable superficial resemblance to *Centriscus*, but the snout is even longer and more perfectly tubular than that of *Centriscus*.

Though an undoubted Plectognath, it is quite unlike any other member of that family, and therefore stands as the type of a new genus, *Halimochirurgus*.

In allusion to its *Centriscus*-like shape, I have called it *Halimochirurgus centriscoides*.

Only this one specimen is known: it was lately dredged by the "Investigator" in the Gulf of Manár, at a depth of 143 fathoms. Its large eye and the delicacy of its tissues are almost sufficient evidence that it lived at the depth at which it was dredged.

The stomach is empty, and therefore gives us no clue to the habits of the animal; but the curious tubular snout with the little valve-like mouth near the end of it look as if meant for suction; and if I might hazard a guess I should say that this fish probably lived by probing for worms hidden in the mud at the bottom of the sea.