

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

No. I.—NOTE ON *DIACAMMA*, A PONERINE GENUS OF ANTS, AND OF THE FINDING OF A FEMALE OF *D. VAGANS*, SMITH.

Of the hunting ants, *Poneridæ*, belonging to the genus *Diacamma*, Mayr, I am personally acquainted with only two species in Burma, *D. vagans*, Smith, and *D. scalpratum*, Smith. The former is smaller and less common than the latter, and so far as my experience goes, has the entrance to its nest-tunnels under a stone or fallen log, while the latter species makes its nests boldly in the open, like many of the *Camponotidæ*. It is curious to note what a difference there is between the outside look of the entrance of a nest of *D. scalpratum*, and of that of some species of *Camponotus*. *C. rufoglaucus*, for instance, carries out the earth-debris of its nest and piles it so close to the entrance that half its time is taken up in clearing out stuff that has tumbled back into the nest. Not so with *D. scalpratum*, a self-possessed and very clever ant, whose nests can be distinguished at a glance. The grains of earth dug out and carried to the surface are always thrown well away from the entrance to the nest. There is one curious point of resemblance, however, between the nests of *Camponotus* and the nests of *Diacamma*. The earth-debris when carried out is always piled to one side of the nest, never round it, as in the nests of some of the *Pheidole*.

If you push a twig into the entrance to the nest of *D. scalpratum*, a commotion ensues, the workers swarm out in numbers, jaws open, and stings ready, but there is no haste and no rushing about in a vulgar flurry as is seen when a nest of *Camponotus* is disturbed. Leave the twig in and the nearest *D. scalpratum* will seize it in her jaws, and after trying to sting it, will tug and tug till she either drags or carries it out, when it is taken to the rubbish heap and chucked down with every look of disgust and scorn. I once weighed a ♀ of *D. scalpratum* and the little piece of stick it had carried out of its nest and calculated that, had I proportionate strength and dexterity, I ought to be able to walk off with a three-ton teak log. What a very useful Forest officer I would be under such circumstances. *Diacamma* ♀ has been for years a desideratum to Myrmecologists. It makes me sad to think of the many nests I have ruined, the hours of hard labour I have spent, and the language that I have used in the futile search for ♀ *Diacamma*. I had given up all hope of finding her when I chanced on two taking a walk. It happened in this wise. On the 19th June, 1898, I was inspecting the boundaries of a Forest reserve in the Taungoo district. I was passing over a cleared fire trace when my attention was attracted by a number of *D. vagans*, which were quartering the ground in a rather more hurried and aimless way than is usual with that very self-possessed species. The nest seemed to be under one end of a felled tree which had evidently been cut down in clearing the fire-trace. Imagine my delight when, as I stood

watching, I observed a winged ant larger than any of the workers creeping out from underneath the fallen tree. Close to her were three or four of the workers following with every demonstration of vigilance. On my seizing the ♀ with my forceps, two of the workers gave battle, holding on to and stinging the forceps with all their might. I had to bottle them along with the ♀. I then had the log turned over. There were swarms of workers, but not another winged specimen, nor any pupæ, nor eggs. I searched and searched but could find no more, and was just going on when I caught sight of another ♀ walking all by herself fully ten feet from the nest. I bottled her promptly and then a few more of the workers.

♀ *Diacamma* closely resembles the ♂, but apart from the fact of being winged, it is larger and heavier with a broader mesothorax, and a larger abdomen. The striations are similar, but as in *Odontoponera* ♀ compared with *Odontoponera* ♂ the scutellum is larger and more developed and longitudinally striated.

Diacamma ♀ L. 14 mm.

Do. ♂ L. 11 mm.

C. T. BINGHAM, Colonel.

MANDALAY, 5th June, 1899.

No. II.—A "RARE" BAT—AN APPEAL.

Mr. T. B. Fry recently sent me a pair of bats shot by him on the Belgaum-Kanara boundary (Lat. 15. 30' N., Long. 74. 40' E). I can distinguish them in no way from *Vespertilio pachyotis*, Dobson—*Vesperugo pachyotis*, No. 177 of Blanford's "Mammals."

This species was founded on a pair obtained in the Khasi Hills of Assam (Lat. 25 to 26-N., Long. 91 to 92-E.) nearly 30 years ago, since which its existence has not again been recorded.

Two years ago I shot a bat in the Surat District which was identified by Mr. Thomas of the British Museum as *Pipistrellus dormeri*, Dobson (*Nycticejus dormeri*, No. 193 of Blanford). Mr. Thomas wrote of it in this Journal as "this rare bat," while Blanford records only three known specimens; yet, later on, I was able to obtain any number of specimens, and found it to be quite one of the commonest local bats.

I think these examples show how little is known of the distribution of our bats, and emboldens me to ask members all over the country to shoot and send in bats, which I shall be happy to do my best to identify for the Society.

The British Museum is badly in want of skins and skulls of bats, and I shall be delighted to explain to any one willing to take up this work how the skins should be "made up."