

THE MOLLUSCA.

Part I.—Gasteropoda.

By CHARLES HEDLEY.

Many of the introductory remarks which prefaced collections previously dealt with, apply with equal force to the Mollusca. Little was known of the Mollusca of the Ellice Group prior to our Expedition. With one exception, none of the naturalists—Dana, Whitmee, Woodford, Finsch—who have been to the archipelago, gathered any shells. The exception being Dr. Ed. Graeffe, who visited most of the atolls in the interest of the Godeffroy Museum. The land shells he procured are described by Mousson.* A few other animals described by German authors from this group were probably also collected by him.

The poverty of the fauna of the atoll, compared with that of any continental area lying under corresponding latitudes, such as Queensland, New Guinea, or the Melanesian Plateau, again asserts itself. Whole groups, the Brachiopoda and the Polyplacophora, are missing, giving to the fauna an unsymmetrical aspect. Especially significant is the absence of Mollusca with large eggs such as *Nautilus*, *Melo*, or *Voluta* from this drifted fauna. In many cases the Funafuti shells are smaller than the usual stature of their respective species. Harper Pease has remarked that the marine Gasteropoda of the Paumotu are in general dwarfed in comparison with those of Tahiti.† Shipley mentions that specimens of Gephyrean worms from Funafuti were considerably smaller than representatives of the same species from Rotuma.‡

Poor though this fauna be, I have to apologise for the following inadequate account of it. Thorough search would probably result in multiplying the known total three or four times. My commission embraced the study of the Atoll as a whole. Although the Mollusca alone would have afforded occupation for the entire time of an investigator, yet Ethnology, and Botany, and other branches of Zoology equally claimed my attention. On my return the mass of material, molluscan and otherwise, together with the

* Mousson—Journ. de Conch. xxi. 1873, pp. 102–109.

† Pease—Am. Journ. Conch. iv. 1868, p. 109.

‡ Shipley—Proc. Zool. Soc. 1898, p. 468.