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On the existence of a reptile of the ophidian type in the beds with *Ostrea columba*, of the Charente

M.H.E. Sauvage

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

A Monograph of the Silurian Fossils of the Girvan District in Ayrshire. By H. A. NICHOLSON, M.D. &c., and R. ETHERIDGE, Jun., Esq., F.G.S., &c. Fasciculus III. 8vo. London and Edinburgh: Blackwood & Son, 1880.

THIS part completes the first volume of a first-rate palæontological work, the result of enthusiastic labour on the part of the authors, who are fully conversant with their subject. Supplemental matter (derived mainly from new collections made in Ayrshire, and partly from further knowledge acquired in the progress of the work) forms a large part of this Fasciculus, namely the chapters on some of the fossil Protozoa, Cœlenterata (tabulate corals), and Crustacea, from Girvan. Some Annelidan remains, and several so-called "Worm-tracks," or trails and marks due to Crustaceans, Mollusks, and other animals besides Worms (as the authors now recognize them), are treated of; and various Echinoderms (Asteroidea and Crinoidea) are carefully described. These fossils are well illustrated in nine plates. The printing, paper, and plates are good. A careful index for the volume is appended; and altogether the authors may well be proud of their elegant and useful volume.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On the Existence of a Reptile of the Ophidian Type in the Beds with Ostrea columba, of the Charente. By M. H. E. SAUVAGE.

THE Ophidian type, the maximum development of which is at the present epoch, seemed to make its first appearance at the base of the Tertiary, in the genera *Palæophis* and *Paleryx*, discovered by Owen in the London Clay. Fossil snakes, however, were known only by a few rare species found at Sheppey, in the phosphorites of Quercy, and in the Miocene of Sansan. Gervais had figured (but without giving it a name) the vertebra of an Ophidian derived from the sandstones which, at the island of Aix, are above the Cretaceous lignitiferous clays. M. Trémaux de Rochebrune, has since collected vertebræ which enable us to assert the presence of the serpent type as long ago as the Cenomanian epoch, in the Carentonian stage, the sands with *Ostrea columba* of the forest of Basseau in the Charente.

These vertebræ, which belong to the middle region of the body, are 0·013 metre high and 0·014 metre long, and indicate an animal of about 3 metres. The length is equal to the breadth at the level of the costal apophysis; so that the vertebra is strong and thickset. The articular condyle is supported by a very short neck; the articular cavity is circular, such as we find in the Boedonians. The neural canal is narrow, as in the Crotalians; and its section is triangular. The anterior face is broad, the diapophysis and zygosphenes projecting but little. As in the Typhlopian, the parapophysis is reduced to a feeble tubercle, which joins with the diapophysis by a prominent line; the zygapophysis is inclined downwards, backwards, and inwards. The Boas and Pythons have the tubercle for the insertion of the rib placed very near the anterior margin of

the centrum; this is also the case with the Cretaceous serpent. When we examine the vertebræ from above, the costal tubercle appears immediately outside of and a little behind the diapophysis, reminding us of what is seen in *Aerochordus*. The process of the neural spine is united to the diapophysis by a slightly excavated line. The neurapophysis is robust, and the neural spine broad, tolerably high, and flattened at its upper margin, which must have given attachment to a powerful ligament; this neural spine occupies the greater part of the length of the centrum, as in the Crotalians. The inferior surface of the centrum is flattened, which recalls the vertebra of the Amphisbænians; we may also recognize the absence of any hypapophysial tubercle, as in the Typhlopian, which, as is well known, form the passage from the Ophidians to the Saurians.

The Cretaceous serpent, at present the most ancient known Ophidian, presents such manifold analogies that it is not possible to refer it to one rather than another of the great divisions accepted for existing snakes; it indicates the existence as early as the Cenomanian epoch of a peculiar genus, which we propose to name *Simoliophis*, giving the species the denomination *S. Rochebruni*, from the name of the zealous naturalist to whom the discovery of this interesting type is due.—*Comptes Rendus*. Oct. 18, 1880, p. 671.

On some Arctic Holothurida.

By MM. D. C. DANIELSEN and J. KOREN.

Among the Holothurida obtained by the Norwegian arctic expedition of 1878, the authors notice some new forms, and indicate certain points in the synonymy of previously described species. One of the former is described as the type of a new genus under the name of *Kolga hyalina*, the generic name being derived from that of one of the daughters of the goddess of the sea in the old northern mythology. The genus belongs to Théel's family Elpididæ, and is characterized as follows:—

Genus *KOLGA*, g. n.

Body bilateral. A buccal disk, furnished with ten tentacles, turned towards the ventral surface. Anal aperture on the dorsal surface (near the posterior extremity). On the anterior part of the back a projecting collar, furnished with papillæ. Just in front of this (and usually concealed by it) are two apertures, one for the generative organs, the other for the stone-canal. Feet on both sides of the body and around its posterior extremity. Sexes separate. No intestinal appendages (lungs).

Kolga hyalina, sp. n.

Body 50 millims. long, 15–20 high, and 12–15 broad. Back very convex; on the collar six transversely arranged papillæ, of which the two middlemost are the longest. Sixteen long, thick, almost retractile feet, five on each side and six around the posterior end. Skin of the body diaphanous. Tentacles five-lobed, each lobe trifid.

Hab. Station 295, 71° 59' N. lat., 11° 40' E. long., at a depth of 1110 fathoms, temperature –1°·3 C., in *Biloculina*-ooze; Station 303,