

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## SPADIX PURPUREA, GOSSE.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

Falmouth, September 30, 1853.

GENTLEMEN, — The *Spadix purpurea*, Gosse (*Arum Cocksii*, Vigurs; *vide* Report of the Royal Polytechnic Society, 1849) is an old friend of mine, having found it in the autumn of 1844, attached to the under surface of a large stone, extreme low water mark, spring tide, Gwyllyn-vase, in the neighbourhood. Since that period a great number of specimens have been sent to some of the first-class naturalists of the age, in this country, on the continent, and in America, but hitherto it has proved an enigma not easily solved. In the year 1847 Mr. J. Alder sent several from Falmouth to the Members of the Natural-History Section, British Association, and specimens alive were forwarded, per post, to Sir G. Dalyell, but unfortunately death terminated the career of this good and great man before he had time to untie the Gordian knot. I am glad that another habitat has been found for this interesting creature. I have repeatedly produced the young from the ova; they are free for several days, and perambulate on their stilt-like legs with ease and agility.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

W. P. COCKS.

*Note on the Parasitism of Comandra umbellata, Nutt.*

By ASA GRAY.

So long ago as the year 1847, Mr. William Mitten, an English botanist, communicated to Hooker's London Journal of Botany (vol. vi. p. 146. pl. 4) a brief article, on the œconomy of the roots of *Thesium linophyllum*; in which he shows that the roots of this plant are parasitic; the ramifications of the root forming attachments, by means of suckers, with the roots of adjacent plants of various species. The same parasitism probably occurs in other species of *Thesium*, if not in the genus generally. But I am not aware that the fact has been confirmed on the continental species, which are somewhat numerous, although attention has been called to the subject by the reprint of Mr. Mitten's article in the 'Annales des Sciences Naturelles' (in the volume which bears the nominal date of 1847), and an interesting extension was at once given to the discovery by M. Decaisne, who detected a similar parasitic attachment of the rootlets of *Melampyrum*, *Pedicularis*, and other rhinanthaceous plants long known to be uncultivable.

In the Botanical Text-book, I had called attention to the related genus *Comandra*, which replaces *Thesium* in this country, as likely to exhibit the same parasitic œconomy, but, pressed by other occupations, had neglected to make the examination myself; nor had I any notice of the observation having been made by others, although *Comandra umbellata* is everywhere a common plant in the United States.

The discovery, however, has now been made by my esteemed correspondent, Mr. Jacob Stauffer, of Mount Joy, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He has recently sent me fresh specimens of *Comandra umbellata*, with its elongated and woody subterranean stems, giving off numerous roots, the branches of which are often expanded at their tips into a small tubercle or sucker, which is implanted by its disc-like surface upon the bark of adjacent roots, principally of shrubs. The foster-plants, in the specimens communicated, are Blueberries and Huckleberries (*Vaccinium vacillans* and *Gaylussacia resinosa*). Mr. Stauffer's specimens are accompanied by a neat drawing, illustrating the mode of attachment. This I would gladly forward for the engraver: but it will suffice, perhaps, for the present to say, that the attachment is similar to that so clearly exhibited by Mr. Mitten, in the plate which accompanies his article; only that the rootlets in *Comandra* arise from subterranean stems, and the suckers, so far as I have examined, do not appear to penetrate the foster-root deeper than the surface of its wood.

Since the above was written and in type, I have received from Mr. Stauffer the announcement of his discovery of the parasitism of *Gerardia flava*, accompanied by a drawing which exhibits it, and a specimen which plainly shows the attachment. The numerous branches of the root are not only attached by discs or suckers to the bark of the root of the foster-plant (in this case either white oak or witch hazel), but also are implanted upon each other, forming parasitical anastomoses.—*Silliman's Journal*, Sept. 1853.

#### RARE IRISH MOLLUSCA.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

Windsor Lodge, Monkstown, co. Dublin,  
September 30, 1853.

GENTLEMEN,—Having had a few days' dredging last month off this coast, will you kindly record for me, at your earliest convenience, the obtaining of the following Mollusca? Those species marked with an asterisk I believe to be new to the fauna of this county.

\**Corbula rosea*. Off Dublin Bay.

*Lyonsia Norvegica*. Killiney Bay and Dalkey Sound.

\**Thracia distorta*. Dalkey Sound.

*Cochlodesma pratense*. Killiney Bay and Dalkey Sound.

*Solecurtis coarctatus*. Same localities as the last species.

\**Astarte elliptica*. Dalkey Sound.

— *sulcata*, var. *Scotica*. Same locality as the last species.

\**Lepton squamosum*. Dalkey Sound and Killiney Bay.

\**Nucula radiata*. Dalkey Sound.

\* — *tenuis*. Same locality.

*Leda caudata*. Killiney Bay and Dalkey Sound.

*Trophon Barvicensis*. Dalkey Sound.

*Mangelia septangularis*. Same locality.

*Phylina scabra*. Same locality.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

WILLIAM WHITE WALPOLE.