

VI.—Note on some Specimens of *Cypræa* (Cowries) from the Sandwich Islands. By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S., V.P.Z.S. &c.

THE British Museum has lately received, from Mr. Pease of Honolulu in the Sandwich Islands, a small collection of marine shells, among which there are a number of specimens of Cowries (*Cypræidæ*), all more or less differing from the usual normal condition of the species.

The peculiarities may be separated under two heads.

I. Many specimens, instead of being of their usual colour, are much paler, nearly white, with the markings which are characteristic of the species very pale and indistinct, or in some cases entirely obliterated.

Specimens with this peculiarity occur of the following species :—

1. *Cypræa caurica*. Very pale; margin pure white, very obscurely spotted.

2. *Cypræa cruenta*. The back with three slightly marked, broad bands, the purple spots on the margin scarcely indicated, and the usual orange colour of the mouth only forming a pale yellowish tint between the teeth.

3. *Cypræa fimbriata*? The back white, with three very obscure, interrupted, broad, brown bands; the base white; the margin with a few small, pale brown, round spots; and the apices of the aperture without any indications of the usual purple spots.

4. *Cypræa Gascoini*. Much paler than the specimen originally described, being very pale dirty yellowish, with regular circular white spots; the base white, with a few small brown dots on the upper edge of the margin. One specimen is pale yellowish white, with very obscure, almost imperceptible indications of the round whiter spots on the back.

II. The second series, instead of being of their usual colour, are of a more or less deep and bright pellucid yelk-yellow colour, with the markings that characterize the species in other localities more or less completely obliterated.

As, for example,—

1. *Cypræa sulcidentata*. There was only a bad specimen of this species in the collection; but I have seen other specimens, sent at the same time from the same locality, which are of a very bright orange-yellow colour, almost as bright and deep as a fine-coloured orange living *Cypræa aurora*.

2. *Cypræa arenosa*. Much yellower and more pellucid than usual.

3. *Cypræa Isabella*. More pellucid than usual, with the black marks very distinct and large.

4. *Cypræa Helvola*. Of a pale yellow colour, with white

margins; the darker spot of the back very obscurely indicated. There were only two, in a large series of specimens, in which these marks were distinct, and in them they were paler than usual. The base very pale yellowish, rather darker between the teeth of the aperture.

5. *Cypræa staphylæa*. The larger number of the specimens of this species are bright orange-yellow, polished, and without any of the usual white tubercles. Some of them have an irregular white blotch on each side.

Some specimens have more or less distinct small white dots on the back, in place of the tubercles; one large specimen has these spots very slightly raised, thus approaching the normal state of the species.

With these shells were sent—

1. *Cypræa Madagascariensis*, in the usual state of the species.

2. *Cypræa staphylæa*. A small, very dark-coloured variety, of a uniform pale brown colour on the back, with numerous minute white dots; the base white, with yellow-edged teeth, and some dark brown lines on the upper edge of the margin of each end of the shell.

I have no materials to explain the cause of this absence and alteration in the usual colour of such a number of species of shells belonging to a single family. As far as I have observed, the peculiarities are restricted to the species of this group; the shells belonging to the other families that were sent with them being of their normal colour. The specimens, I may observe, are of the usual size and form, and are easily determined by comparison with specimens from other localities.

VII.—*A Notice of Nature-Printing of Sea-weeds on the Rocks in the vicinity of Stromness, Orkney.* By CHARLES WILLIAM PEACH*.

I BEG to lay before the Society a most interesting fact of true nature-printing of sea-weeds which I met with in August 1856, immediately below the ruins of the ancient episcopal palace of Stromness. I was examining on the sea-shore the charnel-house in which lie the skeletons of the ancient denizens of the waters of the Old Red Sandstone period; my attention was engrossed by their numbers and variety, and the beauty of the sculpture of the black shining wings and dermal covering of the *Pterichthys*, the "berry upon bone" cuirass of the *Cocosteus*, the fluted and polished spears and delicately fretted mail of the *Diplacanthus*,

* Communicated by the author; having been read at the last meeting of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, on the 28th April 1858.



Gray, John Edward. 1858. "VI.—Note on some specimens of *Cypræa* (Cowries) from the Sandwich Islands." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 2, 49–50.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/19434>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/34491>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.