

in the evening and there made a meal of a gravid sow, for when it was skinned next day it was found to contain thirteen pigs of various sizes in all, and by these the reptile had been so distended that it was unable to make it's way out through the hole by which it had entered.

While pythons under twenty feet are common enough, the occurrence of a 30ft. snake in the Peninsula seems to me of sufficient interest to be recorded here.

C. BODEN KLOSS, F. Z. S.

### Account of three Snakes.

*Coluber oxycephalus*. This snake is usually bright green above and of a paler colour below, the tail being yellowish brown as if it were withered: the Dyaks here on that account call this snake the Ular Matiko. A short time ago the Museum received a large specimen over 4 feet long which had no trace of a green colour: dorsally throughout the animal had a uniform brownish colour like that of the tail of a normal form; ventrally it was pale yellowish. In other respects the specimen conforms precisely to the description of *C. oxycephalus*. In the Museum Catalogue of snakes Mr. R. Shelford my predecessor states that on the sea coast near the mouth of Trusan river he took a brilliant ochreous specimen of this species which was put in formol: after two or three days it turned green but finally the specimen became rotten and had to be thrown away. Possibly his specimen was the same as the variety now described. The colour of my variety however is quite permanent in methylated spirits.

*Dipsadomorphus cynodon*. The British Museum catalogue describes 3 distinct colour varieties of this rather large snake. Our Museum has 19 specimens, of which one from Bau received a year ago and one from Kuching just arrived are of the type described below which does not come directly under any one of the 3 varieties described by Mr. Boulenger but is not far from his variety B.



Dorsally the general colour is yellowish brown speckled with close-set irregular black dots: there are a number of ill defined black cross bars which are not so wide as the interspaces between them but anteriorly in the first  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its length all these colours are merged together. In the posterior half of the body there is a series of white spots close to the ventrally and anteriorly the colour is yellow with some black spots, posteriorly the 2 colours merge the black predominating. The tail is black with incomplete white rings. These 2 species of snakes were taken near the Astana, Kuching by His Highness the Rajah Muda of Sarawak who kindly presented to the Museum all 3 snakes here mentioned.

JOHN HEWITT.

Note on the life-history of the Cicindelid beetle, *Collyris emarginatus*, Dej.

Within quite recent years a most interesting entomological discovery has been made by Dr. J. C. Koningsberger of the Buitenzorg Zoological Museum, but the facts being hidden in a publication of somewhat limited circulation seem to have escaped the general notice of those interested in the insects of the Far East.

Nearly all the Cicindelidae or tiger-beetles are found in exposed situations, such as sandy banks, roads or even the sea-shore and as a general rule the larvae live in burrows in the soil and feed on insects which they capture when these pass over their burrows. *Collyris emarginata* however is arboreal in its habits, running with great speed over leaves and flowers and readily taking to wing; its larvae live in small burrows excavated in coffee shoots and in these burrows await their prey which consists of ants and aphides. Cicindelid larvae are readily recognised by the swollen anterior end and by the presence of two tubercles armed with small hooks on the dorsal surface of the eighth segment; by means of these protuberances the larvae are enabled to wedge themselves up at the top of their burrows awaiting their prey, retiring to the



bottom of the burrows once the prey has been seized. The *Collyris* larvae differs in no important particulars from the characteristic type, though its habit of living in burrows in wood is sufficiently remarkable. Dr. Koningsberger informs me that he never observed the egg-laying and that he never found any very young larvae, he is unable then to state whether the eggs are laid under bark or on it, and if the young larvae excavates for itself a small burrow which is enlarged as the larva grows in size. Pupation takes place in the burrow. In the *Dentchi Entom. Zeitschrift* for 1905. p. 172 this Cicindelid is alluded to as herbivorous, but Dr. Koningsberger tells me that this is a mistake, the beetle living on small insects, just like other Cicindelidae. Dr. Koningsberger publishes an all-too brief account of this larva and a poor figure in "*Mededeelingen uit 'Slands Plantentuin*" XLIV p. 113. fig. 59. (1901). It is much to be hoped that more information will soon be forthcoming about this most interesting form and its allied species. After all it is facts about the life-histories of insects that is wanted now, rather than more dried specimens, and it is a standing reproach to entomologists that so little is known about some quite common tropical insects.

R. SHELFORD.

### Nesting of Silk-weaving Ants.

The remarkable habit of the "Karinga" ant (*Oecophylla smaragdina*) in employing its larva as a spinning machine is well known, thanks to the observations of Ridley in Singapore (this journal xxii. 345, (1890-1) and of Holland in Ceylon (Proc. Ent. Soc. London, 1896. p. ix. E.E. Green. On the habits of *Oecophylla smaragdina*). The habit may be mentioned again in order to shew the interest of other observations on another species of ant belonging to a different sub-family. The nest of *Oecophylla smaragdina* is constructed of leaves bound together with a web of silk. If the leaves are torn apart it has been observed that the adult ants immediately repair the breach in the following manner:—several ants hold the separated

Jour. Straits Branch





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*Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 45, 282–284.

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