ON A BRITISH SPECIES OF MYRINA, WITH A NOTE ON THE GENUS IDAS.

By J. T. MARSHALL,

Sevenoaks, Torquay.

In the month of June last an Aberdeen trawl-boat brought into that port the skull of a whale, which arrested the attention of Mr. James Simpson, an indefatigable collector of the Mollusca, who resides in that city. When he went on board to examine it he found the skull bare of flesh, but covered with an oily exudation caused by some days exposure to a very hot sun, and although it was almost unapproachable on account of the indescribable stench, he went close enough to observe a number of "small mussels" clinging to it, and secured some of them. He writes me that "there must have been thousands on the skull, but by far the largest number were baby shells. The adults were anchored by a byssus in the cavities, while the young swarmed over the smooth surfaces. They were very much decomposed, so I was glad to get rid of the animal matter as soon as possible." One of the crew of the trawler, known to Mr. Simpson as a veracious man, at once told him that the whale's skull was brought up in the trawl "on the north edge of the Great Fisher Bank, about 150 miles N. E. of Aberdeen, which would be nearly 100 miles east of the Orkneys, in 40 to 50 fathoms."

Mr. Simpson having submitted some of these "mussels" for my opinion, I at once saw they were unlike any species yet found in our seas, and that they corresponded very closely indeed to the *Myrina* of H. and A. Adams, a genus founded on a single Japanese species. I propose therefore to name this shell *Myrina simpsoni*, after the discoverer. That it is a native of the British seas is placed beyond doubt from the fact that, wherever the whale's skull may have come from originally, it was trawled from the bottom, where it had sunk a foot deep in the mud, the marks of which were plainly visible. The Great Fisher Bank is practically a continuation of the Doggerbank, and extends up the North Sea from the Firth of Tay to the extremity of Caithness.

The animal could not be described on account of the collapsed condition the specimens were in. An attempt to soak one or two that were dried up revealed nothing of any consistency except the adductor muscles, which are unusually large and strong.

Myrina simpsoni, n. sp.

The shell is transversely oblong, convex, and of a thin texture; sculpture, microscopic and close-set striæ which radiate from the beaks, and equally fine transverse striæ, with coarse and irregular lines of growth; in the centre of each valve are five or six longitudinal obtuse riblets, which cross the shell from the upper to the lower margin; epidermis yellowish-brown, persistent, highly polished, with a blistered appearance over the central riblets; colour under the epidermis pearl-grey; margins nearly straight at the upper part, ascending very slightly from the umbones, gently incurved in the lower margin, rounded on the anterior side with a greater slope from the beaks, and sloping from the back on the posterior side and evenly rounded, though this part is broader in some specimens than in others, while both sides are always deeper than the centre; umbones very gibbous and swollen; beaks incurved, and placed very near the anterior side; ligament internal, large and strong; inside pearl-grey, iridescent, microscopically rayed; hinge-line almost straight; hinge-plate narrow, thickened, slightly and very finely crenated on the posterior side; there is a small and obtuse excrescence on the anterior side just below the beak; edges plain; muscular scars very slight.

Length 0·45 inch. Breadth 1 inch.

Hab.—North edge of the Great Fisher Bank, about 150 miles N.E. of Aberdeen, in 40 to 50 fathoms.

I have given the average dimensions, but the largest are just under 1¼ in. by ½ in. The central ribs or corrugations vary in degree from being merely faint rays to well-developed corrugations, and they probably serve the purpose of strengthening the shell in that part, like the internal strengthening ribs of *Isocardia cor*. These riblets show through the shell but are not impressed on the inside, being obviously only surface sculpture.

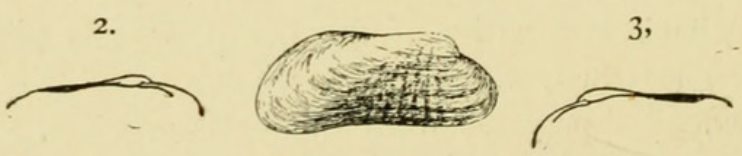

Fig. 1.—*Myrina simpsoni*, n. sp. View from the right side.
Figs. 2 and 3.—Hinge-line of left and right valves.

This shell is like, except in size, *M. coppingeri*, E. A. Smith,[1] a "Challenger" species from Cape York, N. Australia, 1400 fathoms; but this is wider in proportion to length, the lower or ventral margin

1 "Challenger" Pelecypoda, p. 281, pl. xvi, figs. 9, 9b.

is more incurved, with central rays or riblets, and the hinge-line is crenated on one side only of the ligament. It also resembles *Idas argenteus*, Jeffreys,[2] but this is very much larger, the lower margin is concave, the epidermis does not rise into fibrous excrescences on the posterior side, and the hinge-line is striated on one side only. Gwyn Jeffrey's figure must not be taken as correctly representing *I. argenteus*, that species having been described and figured from a decorticated valve, which could not exhibit the fibrous epidermis, in addition to which, the beaks are shown small and pointed, while they should be incurved and invisible, with large obtuse umbones as in *Modiola*, and similar to *Myrina coppingeri* and *M. simpsoni;* while it must also be remembered that *I. argenteus* is variable in its outlines, in consequence of its peculiar adaptability to habitat. In specimens of the same size the two are very closely allied, and in a strong light some examples of *I. argenteus* are found to have rays down the centre of each valve corresponding to the strengthening riblets of *M. simpsoni*.

Idas of Jeffreys is no more than a synonym of *Myrina*, H. and A. Adams. A valve was dredged in mid-Atlantic by the "Valorous" in 1450 fathoms, and another on the coast of Portugal by the "Porcupine" in 994 fathoms (not Bay of Biscay, wrongly recorded by Jeffreys). In describing the genus from these two valves, Gwyn Jeffreys ventured to describe the ligament or cartilage as external, and in describing the species (*I. argenteus*) he wrote "ligament not observable, the specimens being imperfect single valves, but certainly not internal"; while Mr. Edgar A. Smith, relying on this statement when describing his *Myrina coppingeri*, separates it, and rightly so, from *Idas* because though it "has the hinge-plate similarly crenated, the ligament is described as external," overlooking Gwyn Jeffrey's account of the discovery of living specimens "between the Hebrides and Faroes in 516 fathoms, inhabiting deserted tubes of *Teredo megotara* in a piece of pine-wood, and in which the *Idas* were affixed by a byssus. * * * An internal and long cartilage covers the hinge, and I was mistaken as to this when I described the species from two small valves." So that the genus *Idas* would appear to be quite superfluous. The author had originally written "Perhaps allied to *Myrina*, although that genus has an internal ligament and wants the hinge-plate crenated." We have seen that the former attribute was an error, and the latter cannot be considered a generic distinction seeing that it is a character equally shared by *Modiolaria*, *Dacrydium*, and *Crenella*, in addition to which

2 "Valorous" Mollusca, Ann. Mag. N. Hist., 1876, p. 248; and Moll. "Lightning" and "Porcupine," Proc. Zool. Soc., 1882, p. 683, pl. xlv, fig. 3.

I have a valve of an undescribed *Myrina* from Korea in which the hinge-plate is strongly crenated on both sides of the ligament. When Gwyn Jeffreys, however, put the matter right about the ligament, he did not formally abandon *Idas*, although the only reason for keeping it alive now is in the hope (a very remote one) of living specimens being found of *Idas dalli*, E. A. Smith,[3] a "Challenger" and "Porcupine" species, and in that shell being found to possess an external ligament. Mr. Edgar A. Smith writes of *I. dalli* that he could not discover "in any of the odd valves (no complete specimen was obtained) any trace either of an internal or external ligament; it is I expect of a very slight character." My valves are in poor condition, and appear granulated on the surface, but that may be owing to a micro-organism, as Mr. Smith describes the shell as "almost destitute of sculpture."

The foregoing three species of *Myrina* have the contour of *Modiolaria*, while *I. dalli* is mytiliform. Gwyn Jeffreys missed the opportunity of describing the animal of *M. argenteus*, and I have failed to make anything that would be reliable out of my resuscitated specimens.

NOTES.

On some large specimens of Valvata piscinalis.—I have recently received from the Coneygre Reservoir, near Dudley, Staffordshire, some specimens of *Valvata piscinalis*, Müll., which seem worthy of recording on account of their large size. Three of the largest specimens measured in height 6·9, 6·8, and 6·5 mm., whilst the average of twenty was 6 mm. I at first thought that possibly this large size was due to the great volume of water in which they had lived, but curiously to say, examples of *Limnaea peregra* and *L. glabra*, which were found in company with *V. piscinalis* were all very small.—WALTER E. COLLINGE.

Note on Helix rufescens.—In 1894, Mr. Collinge recorded the occurrence of *H. rufescens* from Selly Oak and near Olton, Warwickshire (Journ. B'gham. N. H. & Phil. Soc., 1894, vol. i, p. 18). Previous to this, local conchologists doubted the presence of this widely distributed species, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham. The late Mr. G. Sherriff Tye, who had worked the district for very many years, had never met with it. It may therefore be of interest to record that I have taken upwards of a dozen specimens in the Solihull and Knowle district during the last five years. I have also recently examined the late Mr. W. G. Blatch's collection, which is now in my possession, and I find there thirteen specimens labelled "Knowle," collected between 1872 and 1877.—H. WILLOUGHBY ELLIS.

3 "Challenger" Pelecypoda, p. 281, pl. xvi, figs. 10, 10b.