

MAY 3.

Mr. THOS. MEEHAN, Vice-President, in the chair.

Twenty-three persons present.

*On Aphyllon as a root Parasite.*—Mr. Thomas Meehan remarked that the life histories of many of our root parasites were still obscure,—in many cases we hardly knew whether they were annual or perennial; how long it took for them to perfect themselves, and in some cases it was even doubted whether they were parasites in the true sense of the word, or merely obtained a start by feeding on partially decomposed vegetable matter. In one of the earlier editions of *Flora Cestricea*, Dr. Wm. Darlington observes that he has often dug *Aphyllon uniflorum* without finding it attached to anything,—and, though he omits this remark in later editions, he observes that it is “*Perennial?*” The speaker remarked that he had dug this species very carefully when in bloom, and washed the earth gently away, finding them truly parasitic on the coarser fibres of Asters and Goldenrods. They very readily separate from their connection unless carefully handled, which may account for the failure to note their true parasitic nature.

A specimen sent by Mr. Morris, a florist of Des Moines Iowa, of an allied species *A. fasciculatum* Torr. and G., (*Phelipæa fasciculata* of some authors), gives the opportunity for acquiring certain knowledge in relation to these points. Mr. Morris raised numerous plants of the common bedding geranium (*Pelargonium zonale*). The cuttings were made in October and November last. They were potted in earth taken from a piece of newly cleared woodland in the vicinity. The plants appeared in many of the geranium pots in his greenhouse, and were in full flower in April. As the plants were only in this soil for about three months, the seeds must have sprouted, flowered, and were on the decline in that time. They are therefore annual, and a very short-lived annual at that.

In regard to the parasitism, the attachment in several that Mr. Meehan had examined, was to the coarser roots. In the plant exhibited, it was to the main stem of the cuttings beneath the ground, and not to the roots, which in this specimen were merely weak fibres.

The geranium, an African plant, and of a very different character from these which the *Aphyllon* has been in the habit of feeding on, proving so acceptable to it in this instance, shows that it is either not partial in its parasitic tastes, or that it has ready powers of adaptation when something suited to its peculiar habits comes along.

MAY 10.

The President, Dr. JOSEPH LEIDY, in the chair.

Twenty persons present.



Meehan, Thomas. 1887. "On Aphyllon as a Root Parasite." *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* 39, 154–154.

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