

This classification is, to a certain extent, provisional; and may have to be somewhat modified when we have a fuller knowledge of the anatomy. Whatever else may be said of it, the principle adopted is the right one, and the only one which modern science can recognize. The arrangement of the Adams brothers is largely artificial, both as to genera and subgenera, as well as the system adopted by Lea, as they bring together side by side, species and groups from every country which have no close relationship whatever, and by such methods anatomical and conchological characters, the facts of geographical distribution, habits and palæontology, are ignored.

---

#### THE SMALL GREY SLUG IN JAMAICA.

BY T. D. A. COCKERELL.

---

Some days ago Mr. W. Harris sent me from Cinchona some strawberry plants, together with a beetle larva which was injuring them. Of this larva there will be more to say hereafter, but the object of the present note is to record that among the plants I found three specimens of the small, grey slug of Europe, *Agriolimax agrestis*. This slug, well-known as a garden pest in England, has never before been noticed in the West Indies, and there can be no doubt that it has been introduced with plants. It is, I suppose, almost impossible to import living plants without sooner or later introducing foreign slugs. They and their eggs come in the earth about the roots, and, in many cases, it must be practically impossible to detect them on arrival. It might be advisable in some cases to isolate newly-arrived plants by water, and search for slugs on them at intervals; or we might import the carnivorous slug, *Testacella*; or introduce some of our native carnivorous snails, *Oleacina*, into the locality where the plants were being propagated. It has been recorded that in twenty-four hours, 25 specimens of *Testacella* devoured 25 earthworms and 25 *Agriolimax agrestis*.

The small, grey slug, although now first detected here, has spread to many distant localities by human means. I have seen specimens from various parts of the United States, west to the Pacific coast and east to New Jersey, from St. Helena, the Canary Islands, Tristan d'Acunha, New Zealand, etc., and no doubt in time it will inhabit every part of the earth in which the climate is suit-



able to it. In Jamaica it will probably remain confined to the higher altitudes.

Institute of Jamaica, April 13, 1893.

---

#### A REPLY TO PROFESSOR WHEELER.

---

I think that quite enough has been said on the subject of the Unio muddle in the columns of the NAUTILUS, and I do not want to revive the subject. But there are one or two suggestive points in Professor Wheeler's note in the May number that I want to call attention to.

While a Congress of American conchologists might be able to settle certain contested points in nomenclature, if their work did not come into too glaring opposition to certain established laws recognized by scientific societies in general, yet I believe it is impossible for any such body to straighten out the muddle of specific limits, or perhaps, in all cases, the relations of one species to another. I believe that an expert, a specialist who has devoted years to the loving study of a family or genus, is better qualified to judge on these points than any body of students, no matter how capable they may be otherwise, but who probably have only a mere smattering of the matter in question.

C. B. Adams and Dr. Gould ranked easily among the ablest conchologists in the world, but who can doubt that Mr. Lea, or James Lewis were better qualified to judge on the nice distinctions of the Unionidae, or that Dr. Newcomb was more competent to arrange the Achatinellas, or that Dr. Dall has a better knowledge of deep sea Mollusks than did either of these? Because these men have made life studies of these subjects, while the others were not specially interested in them.

A specialist who works on a difficult or puzzling group, goes over his work again and again, putting it aside when he tires of it, and taking it up when the mind is rested. He patiently and lovingly labors over the most minute and obscure points that to most students would be of little or no interest, because his heart is in the work and he is thoroughly determined to master the whole subject. As a rule, his collecting is largely done in the direction of his hobby, and he therefore has more material to work on than one slightly interested. He eagerly reads all literature relating to his work, and in time, if his judgment is well balanced, he becomes an authority.



Cockerell, Theodore D. A. 1893. "The small grey slug in Jamaica." *The Nautilus* 7, 21–22.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/86832>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/96619>

**Holding Institution**

University of Toronto - Gerstein Science Information Centre

**Sponsored by**

University of Toronto

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: NOT\_IN\_COPYRIGHT

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>.