

THE  
LAND AND FRESH WATER MOLLUSCA  
ROUND CHRISTCHURCH.

C. ASHFORD.

The uniform character of this district, its sandy and gravelly surface, and the entire absence of rocky ground, are conditions unfavourable to a wealth of Land Shells both as regards species and individuals. From the presence of two fine rivers, the Stour and Avon, aquatic species might be presumed to be numerous, and probably are more so than at present appears to be the case, but it should be remembered that the rapid current of these streams after heavy rain is not conducive to the maintenance of species thriving best in quiet waters, besides which the lower reaches are prejudicially affected by the tide. Thus for example, owing to changes in the river outlet at Mundeford, within the short period of our own observation, the southern limit of *Neritina* has been removed higher up the Stour.

Of the 131 British species, 79 have been found here. Of these 30 are aquatic.

AQUATIC SPECIES.

Apparently, our only large bivalve is *Anodonta cygnea* which occurs in the Stour but attains no great size. Neither *Unio* nor *Dreissena* has turned up. The smaller bivalves are represented by *Sphaerium corneum* and *Pisidium amnicum*, and the minute kinds by *P. fontinale*, *P. pusillum*, and *P. nitidum*, the last scarce. We have five operculated univalves *Neritina fluviatilis*, both species of *Bythinia* and both of *Valvata*. The pretty little *Neritina* sometimes abounds on the river weeds in many markings and its rather rare colour variety (*cerina*)—lemon yellow without tracery—was first found in the Stour. It occurs there with the type and a very interesting series of transition forms. Nine out of the twelve species of *Planorbis* have been found, the less common being *P. nitidus*, *P. nautilus*, *P. spirorbis*, *P. contortus*, and *P. corneus*. The gregarious *Physa hypnorum* has occurred so sparingly that it is doubtful whether the specimens found may not have come down the river from further north. The very local *Limnæa glabra* has been taken near Holmsley station. *L. stagnalis*, the largest of the genus, is nowhere abundant its young requiring more quiet waters, and conditions

appear unfavourable to *L. auricularia* attaining full size. Both the little freshwater limpets *Ancylus fluviatilis* and *A. lacustris* occur, but it is noteworthy that as yet the latter is represented only by its white variety.

#### TERRESTRIAL SPECIES.

Eleven of the 16 (17?) British slugs have been observed, *Limax* (*Amalia*) *gagates* in a varietal form only. At present the curious *Testacella* with its external shell cannot be included in our list, but its presence in the county is reported from Winchester, Fareham, and Andover. Of the shell-snails *Zonites excavatus* is pretty plentiful, and its clear greenish-yellow variety occupies a small copse at Roeshot Hill to the exclusion of the type. This species was once considered almost peculiar to the North of England, but has since been found in all the channel counties from Kent to Cornwall. Like its congener *Z. nitidus*, which occurs at Christchurch, Holmsley, and Ringwood, it is distinguished from the other members of its genus by having a calcareous "dart" like some *Helices*. *Z. crystallinus*, *Z. fulvus*, and *Z. alliarius* are found occasionally. Eighteen out of the 25 species of *Helix* have been observed. *H. aculeata* with its pretty coronet of epidermal spines occurs sparingly as also the minute *H. pygmaea*; *H. nemoralis* and *H. hortensis* occupy separate quarters, *H. arbustorum* is local and not plentiful, *H. cantiana* is represented by one small colony at Mudeford, *H. sericea* is in some abundance on damp ground near the River Avon, and two specimens of the fragile *H. fusca* have been taken at Holmsley. *H. virgata*, which swarms upon chalk downs has to be searched for here. There is a limited and variable colony of them near Chuton on arable land. *H. ericetorum*, another most prolific species in suitable localities, appears to be altogether absent from this neighbourhood. Two rock-frequenting species *H. lapicida* and *H. rupestris* might reasonably be supposed to be absent, but they have on the contrary established themselves on the old walls of Christchurch Priory where they live together; the latter also occurs on the tombstones of Brockenhurst churchyard. Some of the tiny members of the allied genera, *Pupa* and *Vertigo*, have probably escaped observation; the following have been noticed: *P. umbilicata*, *P. marginata*, *V. anti-vertigo*, *V. pygmaea*, and *V. edentula*. The sinistral *Balia perversa* occurs here as well as in the New Forest. The only *Clausilia* that has been met with is the common *C. rugosa*, but among them two examples of the beautiful and rather rare hyaline variety. *Cochlicopa lubrica* and *Carychium minimum* are not uncommon. A notable absentee is *Cyclostoma elegans*, a species which abounds 12 miles away in the Isle of Purbeck.