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## THE SPONGES OF FUNAFUTI.

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THE collection of sponges obtained by Mr. C. Hedley, though small, is nevertheless interesting.

There are sixteen species; of these the following six are described as new—*Spinosella glomerata*, *Gellius aculeatus*, *Clathria pellicula*, *Agelas gracilis*, *Ciocalypa incrustans*, and *Polymastia dendyi*.

Of the above *Agelas gracilis* is the most interesting, as it widens the range of the genus. With the exception of an outlier recorded from Mauritius and doubtfully from Tristan d'Acunha, this genus has hitherto only been known from the West Indies.

The remaining ten species are—

*Reniera australis*, Lendenfeld, *Reniera* sp.\* which may prove to be a variety of *Reniera rosea*, Bowerbank, *Halichondria solida*, var. *rugosa*, Ridley and Dendy, *Echinodictyum asperum*, Ridley and Dendy, of the latter rare and curious species there are two very fine examples, *Acanthella stipitata*, Carter, *A. pulcherrima*, Ridley and Dendy, *Spiraastrella papillosa*, Ridley and Dendy, *Euspongia irregularis*, var. *silicata*, Lendenfeld, *Hippospongia dura*, Lendenfeld, and *Spongelia fragilis*, var. *irregularis*, Lendenfeld.

The species in many cases are represented by single examples.

The smaller specimens had been placed in a solution of four or five p.c. formol, which proved insufficient for their proper preservation. They reached me in a soft and slimy state, too soft in fact to handle with safety, and before a hand-section could be cut they had to be hardened in alcohol. In consequence of their imperfect preservation and their transference to alcohol, the specimens had some of their characters destroyed, which rendered their exact determination unusually difficult.

Mr. Hedley has kindly supplied the following field notes:—

“To a collector accustomed to the sea beaches of temperate zones, and especially to the shores of Sydney Harbour, the absence of large or conspicuous sponges on the reefs of Funafuti is very marked. Rocky shelves and ledges which in England or

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\* Identical with No. 42, Voy. “Alert,” p. 410.