OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF AUSTRALIAN WATER-MITES (*HYDRACHNELLÆ* ET *HALACARIDÆ*).

By

DR. KARL VIETS,

Bremen, Germany.

We know but very little till now about water-mites from Australia. The recently published description of a new genus and species of *Halacaridæ* and the redescription of a species of *Hydrachnellæ* gave a chance to compile what is known to-day about these animals.

I. HYDRACHNELLÆ.

1. FROM THE CONTINENT.

The first freshwater-mite known from the Australian Continent seems to be (1)* *Hydrachna odonthognatha* Canestrini,[1] collected from a water-beetle from Queensland.

About twenty years later W. J. Rainbow, in his "Synopsis of Australian Acarina",[2] added two more species: (2) *Eylais maccullochi* Rainb. and (3) *Unionocola cumberlandensis* (Rainb.) from ponds at Parramatta. Both species belong to the genus in which the author has placed them, but it seems impossible now to recognize the species and to compare them with others of the two genera.

In 1914 F. Koenike[3] described (4) *Unionicola cirrosa* Koen. from the gills of *Unio nepeanensis* Less. We do not know the habitat of this mite.

W. A. Haswell in 1922 published a study[4] on (5) *Astacocroton molle* Hasw. living in the gill-cavity of the common spiny crayfish (*Astacopsis serratus*). Haswell's paper is principally devoted to the internal anatomy of this interesting mite. It will be necessary to breed the larvæ of *Astacocroton* in order to understand its real relations and to fix its systematic position (*cf.* Viets, Zool. Anz., Bd. xcvii, 1931, p. 85).

Only these four species of *Hydrachnellæ* have been recorded from the continent till now, a very meagre result relative to this widely distributed group of Acari.

---

* Running numbers.
[1] G. Canestrini.—Acari dell' Austria (Atti R. Instituto veneto sci., lett., arti. Venezia, (6), II, 1884 [separ. p. 27]).
[2] W. J. Rainbow.—Rec. Austral. Mus., VI, 3, 1906, p. 159.
[3] F. Koenike.—Abhandl. Nat. Ver. Bremen, XXII, 1914, p. 397.
[4] W. A. Haswell.—Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W., XLVII, 3, 1922, p. 329.