

PREFACE.

IN presenting a new edition of the *Epitome of the Insects of China* to the entomological public, I have endeavoured to bring it down to the present state of the science. The former edition, like all the writings of Donovan, was arranged in accordance with the system of Linnæus, and bore the date of 1798. At that period the science of Entomology was in its infancy; but in the subsequent forty years the progress which has been made, has indeed been rapid. I have endeavoured to render the specific characters more precise, the nomenclature more correct (giving the priority to the oldest specific name), and the synonyms more numerous. The localities in many instances were incorrectly given in the former edition; and I have added many additional observations, either incorporated in the text or given as foot notes, omitting nothing which appeared in the former at all likely to instruct or interest the reader. Alphabetical and systematic indices have also been introduced. I dare not hope that this edition is faultless: I have endeavoured to render the beautiful figures of Donovan as serviceable as possible, and must trust to the indulgence of the more skilful specific entomologist. One circumstance may be mentioned which will, at all events, be deemed an improvement, namely, the introduction of numbers both for the plates and for the several figures on each plate. Those who have consulted synonymical authorities in Entomology are aware of the trouble and confusion which have originated in the want of a

A

PREFACE.

regular numeration of these plates, which was caused by the original periodical appearance of the work, whence it happens that we are referred to Part II. plate 1. (as it may be), and not to a consecutive series of numbers upon the plates, which were, indeed, entirely without a number, and appeared promiscuously.

A German edition of this work was commenced at Leipzig in 1801, edited by J. G. Grubner, but I am not certain whether the entire work was republished or only one of the parts.

Of the Entomology of China little more is known at the present time than Donovan was acquainted with. It is true we continue to receive numerous boxes of insects from China, chiefly purchased in the shops of Canton, but, like every thing Chinese, there is such an absolute monotony in these arrivals, that it is almost impossible to discover in a quantity of these boxes a single species which is not contained in all the rest. It is evident that a considerable employment is produced by the rearing of the Atlas moth and some other species, and in the collection of the other insects which we receive in such abundance. The Chinese boxes are made of a soft wood, about 16 inches by 11 in size, and of a sufficient depth to admit a tall needle; a layer of butterflies and moths stuck close to the point of the needle is placed at the bottom of the box, with another layer of beetles, flies, &c. closely packed together and stuck high up on the needles, the points of which are passed through the wings of the butterflies forming the under layer.

Donovan well observed that "the Chinese, like their neighbours the Japanese, are well acquainted with the natural productions of their empire, and Zoology and Botany, in particular, are favourite studies amongst them."

That the Chinese also pay considerable attention to Entomology is evident, not only from the fact of the employment of silk having had its origin in that country, but also from the numerous beautiful drawings of insects upon rice

PREFACE.

paper, brought to Europe in great quantities. Many of these figures are, however, evidently fictitious, although some are occasionally found accurately correct and most elaborately pencilled.

The few but interesting hints which Sir George Staunton (who accompanied the embassy of the Earl Macartney to China) has given on the practical Entomology of China in the account of his Travels, which was published shortly before the appearance of the first edition of this work, were embodied by Donovan in his pages, and from whence we may be induced to hope that at some future time, some of the insects, as well as plants, of that vast empire may become no less objects of utility and importance than of curiosity; the Chinese cochineal insect,* and that from which the wax of the East is procured, are two species that deserve particular attention. The medical precepts of the Chinese will certainly find but few votaries in Europe, but as articles of medicine, amongst others, the *Mylabris Cichorii*, regarded as the *Cantharides* of the ancients and still used as a vesicant by the Chinese, may be of importance, as it is said to possess more virtues than the *Cantharis vesicatoria* of Europe.

From the vast extent of the Chinese empire and our comparative ignorance of its insect productions, it is almost impossible to speak with any precision upon the interesting subject of its entomological geography. Many of its insects bear a great resemblance, and occasionally appear identical with those

* Dr. Anderson found eight species of *Coccus* at Madras. One of these, he says, was found on a young citron-tree, *citrus sinensis*, just landed from China; it was more deeply intersected between the abdominal rings than any of those of the coast, and he therefore named it *C. Diacopeis*. *Collection of Letters from Madras*, January 28, 1788. The *Cactus Cochiniifer* had been found previous to the appearance of the first edition by Mr. Kincaid at Canton; its Chinese name is *Pau wang*. This had been transmitted to the Nopalry of the Hon. East India Company at Madras, and promised to be of future advantage to the commercial concerns of Great Britain.

PREFACE.

of the eastern parts of India. These are, therefore, doubtless the inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood of Canton, which lies in the same degree of latitude with Bengal. A valuable addition has indeed been made to our knowledge of the entomological productions of Mongolia, and some of the adjacent northern portions of China, by M. Faldermann's publication* of the Coleopterous insects brought from those regions by M. Bungius; from which it would appear that the entomological productions of such portions of China as lie between 40° and 50° of north latitude are quite unlike those of the neighbourhood of Canton lying beneath the tropic of Cancer, bearing, indeed, a far greater resemblance to those of central Russia. It is to be hoped that M. Faldermann will speedily publish the descriptions of the species belonging to the other orders of insects brought from this interesting portion of the globe.

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* *Coleopterorum ab illustris. Bungio in China boreali, Mongolia et montibus Altaicis collect. et ab illustr. Turczaninoffio et Siehuckino e provincia Irkutzh missorum.* (In Mem. Acad. Imper. des Sciences de St. Petersbourg, Tom. 2. 1835.)