

"A Voyage to and Residence in Jamaica

from 1844-1846", by Philip Henry Gosse.

Presented to the Institute of Jamaica by ^{Dr} Philip Gosse.

The writer of this Journal was the famous zoologist who was born in 1810. At the age of 33 he was recommended by the authorities of the British Museum to collect birds and insects in the Tropics. In 1844 he visited Jamaica, where he spent most of his time at Bluefields near the small seaport of Savannah-la-Mar. In 1847 he published the "Birds of Jamaica"; in 1849 there appeared in illustration a folio volume of splendid plates. Two years after there was published his "Naturalists Sojourn in Jamaica".

The Journal which records this Jamaican visit was presented to the Institute of Jamaica a few months ago by Dr. Philip Gosse, a member of the Executive Committee of the Friends of the National Libraries. The full title of his grandfather's Journal is:

"A Voyage to, and Residence in Jamaica from 1844 to 1846
by Philip Henry Gosse".

There are fifty-five closely written foolscap pages in an excellent state of preservation; these are followed by ten pages containing an analysis of the Journal, a list of shipments and a summary of expenditure. Concerning this latter, the author says: "By a very curious, because absolutely unforeseen unexpected coincidence until the accounts were summed up, the amount is exactly £1 per day for the whole period occupied in collecting".

The Journal is of the greatest interest particularly to West Indians and to those who are interested in the Natural History of Jamaica. There are detailed descriptions of the birds and plants of the Island, and two small sketches show the springes that were employed for catching birds like the partridge and white belly. The ^{care} care with which the scientist observed, and then recorded his observations is shown in such a sentence as this, which tells how "when Urania alights in these thus to sink, it chooses a leaf or other surface nearly perpendicular and instantly turns head downward, expanding its wings horizontally, but the fore ones inclined backward

to form an angle with each other partly covering the head ones".

As the Journal shows, the task of collecting was not an easy one. Thus on Thursday, June 19th, Richard and I were "Entomologizing in Belmont". They both rode for several hours with very slender success, procuring only seventeen insects of no note. At another time "I and Sam went into the morass early, but a North was blowing and after some hours, patient though painful trudging bare-footed and bare-legged on the soft mud, stock full of the hard and sharp mangrove shoots, we got one Bessy Kick up".

The lists show the extent of the work done by Dr. Gosse and the shipments included numerous birds, plants, shells, crustacea and insects.

The manuscript Journal is beautifully bound and is a very highly prized addition to the West India Reference Library of the Institute of Jamaica.

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GOSSE
P.M.S.

Kingston.

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