

BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY)

INSECTS OF SAMOA
AND OTHER SAMOAN TERRESTRIAL
ARTHROPODA

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PREFACE

THE genesis of this work is to be found in the visit paid to Samoa by Professor P. A. Buxton and Mr. G. H. E. Hopkins in 1924 and 1925 in order to investigate filariasis in Western Samoa for the London School of Tropical Medicine, in co-operation with the New Zealand Government. This involved residence in Samoa throughout the years 1924 and 1925, which was interrupted only for shorter or longer periods by visits to the New Hebrides, Tonga, etc. Whenever other work permitted, Professor Buxton and Mr. Hopkins devoted time to the making of a general collection of Samoan insects and other terrestrial arthropods occurring on the islands, with the result that on their return to England some 20,000 specimens had been accumulated for examination.

The proper investigation of so much material, a very large proportion of which appeared to represent species hitherto unrecognised, was manifestly a task that could only be adequately discharged by the collaboration of many workers. The richness of the material, however, presented such an opportunity for an analysis of the insect fauna of an isolated island group as had seldom occurred before. On November 27th, 1926, the Trustees of the British Museum undertook to bear the cost of publishing an "Insect Fauna of Samoa," the preparation of which Professor Buxton was anxious to organise, in accordance with proposals he himself had submitted.

Full details of the material examined, and the sources from which it was derived, will be found in the following pages, and a brief general statement is contained in the Summary. Approximately three-fourths of it was collected by Professor Buxton and Mr. Hopkins themselves. The help derived from the supplementary collections lent by the Director of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, and by the Director of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association, was particularly valuable; most of this material had been obtained by men with long experience of collecting in wet forests on oceanic islands, and in consequence it was very rich in the smaller and more obscure species. It is not possible to estimate how many specimens ultimately passed through the hands of the fifty-eight authors who have contributed to this work, in which 1,603 species

are dealt with in rather more than 1,700 pages. In this connection it is interesting to reflect that a dozen years ago, so ignorant were we of the insects of Samoa, that a well-known entomologist (who would be the first to admit his error) gave it as his opinion that "half a dozen cigar boxes would easily hold" the whole of the two years' catch.

The papers published in the following pages cover the whole of the material collected, with the sole exception of the parasitic Hymenoptera. These were deliberately set aside, as they require monographing by genera and families (rather than by geographical units) before it will be possible to draw any general conclusions from them.

The authors who have collaborated in covering so wide a field have been drawn from many nations, and almost half of them live abroad. The writer of this very inadequate preface feels sure that, with him, they would wish to pay a tribute to the inspiration, persuasiveness and tactful insistence which have enabled Professor P. A. Buxton to deliver within ten years of leaving Samoa so complete an account of the insects of those islands. He has borne the entire burden of organisation and editorship up to the point at which manuscripts became converted into print, leaving little to be done within the Department of Entomology, and that little much lightened by his lively co-operation. To A. F. Buxton, Esq., who generously undertook to defray the cost of preparing illustrations which authors were themselves unable to provide, grateful acknowledgments are also due.

8th November, 1935.

N. D. RILEY,
Keeper of Entomology.

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