

## NOTES ON A TRIP TO THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

BY H. F. WICKHAM, IOWA CITY, IOWA.

Comparatively little is known of the insect fauna of the Bahama Islands, since most of the collectors who have gone to the West Indies have confined their attention chiefly to larger and better settled members of this great group, and as a consequence we have a tolerably fair knowledge of such of them as Cuba, Jamaica, Porto Rico, and Guadaloupe, with scarcely any records from the little rocky islets of which the Bahamas proper are composed. Late researches on the coast of Florida have shown a close affinity between the fauna of that region and of the Antilles, so that the study of the insects of the latter has now a direct bearing on that of those of our own domain. The short sketch which follows is intended merely as a preliminary account of a collecting trip to certain points in the British West Indies, and no more is hoped for than to give the reader a general idea of the coleopterous fauna of these at the time of year during which the collections were made. Only occasionally was it possible to land and work the country for insects, as the main object of the expedition, of which the writer was a member, was the study and collection of the marine invertebrata, and most of the time was necessarily devoted to them.

Regarding the general characters of the Bahama Islands, it may be enough to say that they are British possessions, having been first settled in 1629 by that people, but frequently changing hands until 1783; since that time they have remained under English control, and are populated largely by descendants of that nationality, with a very considerable admixture of negroes, who, indeed, predominate on some of the islands, almost to the exclusion of the whites. Excepting the very small rocky islets, all are inhabited, but the soil is so light and stony that its productive powers are limited, and hence we find the principal exports to be fruit, especially pineapples and cocoanuts. Aside from these, some of the larger islands export brazilletto, yellow-wood, lignum-vitæ and fustic, and at one time cotton was an article of considerable commercial importance, but is now little grown. The citrus fruits flourish, but are apparently not exported to any great extent. The uncultivated portions of the surface, which include the greater part of the whole area, are covered in the main by tangled thickets of various shrubs and vines difficult of penetration, and hard to work in. Owing to the broken nature of the islands, farming can only be carried on in small patches and in the most primitive manner.