

invalid, and that, consequently, King Edward VII. is not the King of England!"

Mr. Verrall is to be congratulated on the completion of the second volume of the magnificent series planned by him. Such work is not of merely local or even national value, but affects entomology throughout the world. It sets a higher standard for us all.

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SECRETION OF HYDROCYANIC ACID BY *LEPTODESMUS HAYDENIANUS*, WOOD.

A number of instances of secretions of free hydrocyanic acid in the Myriapods of the family *Polydesmidae* have been recorded, and it is quite probable that this power is possessed by all the members of the family. In 1882 Egeling* discovered that *Paradesmus gracilis*, Koch,† secreted besides benzaldehyde free hydrocyanic acid. Weber (Archiv. f. Mikr. Anat., V. 21, 1882) showed that this secretion was diffused only from certain segments, and that the repugnatory glands, which produce the secretion, open near the middle dorsal line. Haase (Sitzungs. b. d. Gesell. naturf. Freunde zum Berlin, Jahrgang, p. 97, 1889) again refers to this curious secretion. In 1890 W. M. Wheeler reported (Psyche, V. 5, p. 442) this secretion in *Polydesmus (Fontaria) virginensis*, Drury, an abundant species in the middle western States. Early last February, in the foothills near Palo Alto, I collected from beneath stones and logs a number of specimens of *Leptodesmus (Polydesmus) Haydenianus*, Wood, a common and variable Myriapod in this vicinity, and ranging northward to Oregon. They were collected alive, and when the bottle in which they were contained was opened, the strong and pungent odour of prussic acid was almost overpowering. A chemist friend of mine applied the test, and the result showed free hydrocyanic acid. This test, as given by Wheeler, is quite simple: "A few of the *Polydesmi* were ground up in a mortar with a small quantity of water. A few drops of potassium hydrate and ferrous sulphate were then added to the solution obtained by filtering the mass. On the application of gentle heat, and the further addition of a little ferric chloride to dissolve the precipitated ferrous and ferric hydrates, the faint but distinct tinge of Prussian blue attested the presence of free hydrocyanic acid."—K. R. COOLIDGE, Palo Alto, Calif.

*Pflüger's Archiv. f. d. ges. Physiol., V. 28, 1882.

†Indigenous to the Fiji Islands, Moluccas, etc., but now acclimatized in European hothouses.

Mailed March 6th, 1909.