

FEBRUARY 7.

The President, Dr. LEIDY, in the chair.

Twenty-two persons present.

*Filaria of the Black Bass.*—Prof. LEIDY stated that he had been told that the black bass, *Micropterus nigricans*, in some localities is much infested with a red thread worm. One procured in market a few days since for his table, was found to be greatly infested. The worms were coiled in oval masses from the size of a pea to that of a large bean, and were situated beneath the skin, in the muscles and under the membrane lining the abdomen. The worm is cylindrical, slightly narrowed and obtusely rounded at both ends, minutely annulate and otherwise smooth, pale red, bright red, or brownish red, translucent, with the darker red, or brownish intestine and the white œsophagus shining through. Mouth a small pore, unarmed; anus a transverse elliptical pore, terminal. Œsophagus long, capacious, cylindrical, straight or somewhat tortuous, slightly expanded below where it is constricted from the intestine, which is likewise expanded at the commencement, and ends in a short, more translucent rectum. Ovarium and ova indistinctly seen. Length from 3 to 6 inches by half a line in diameter.

The worm appears to be a *Filaria*, but the determination of the species was left for more extended observation.

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FEBRUARY 14.

Mr. MEEHAN, Vice-President, in the chair.

Twenty-six persons present.

*Sponges from the neighborhood of Boston.*—Mr. E. POTTS exhibited some fragments of fresh-water sponges collected in the Cochituate Aqueduct and sent to him by the Superintendent of the Boston Water Works. Alluding to the deleterious effects recently attributed to this sponge, as the cause of the pollution of the Boston water-supply, he said he was not prepared either to affirm or deny it. While he was well aware that a decaying fresh-water sponge was one of the foulest things in nature, in his own experience he had never met with it in sufficient quantities, locally, to suppose it capable of tainting, in its decay, millions of gallons of water, as now represented.

An examination of the sponge as to its specific relations, revealed some peculiar facts. Primarily it was evident that the sponge was

much "mixed"; the presence of two or more species being very apparent.

One of these, with long branching finger-like processes, smooth skeleton spiculæ, no appearance of dermal or flesh spiculæ, while the abundant *smooth* statospheres retained few if any acerate spicules, bore a sufficiently close resemblance to the description of *Spongilla paupercula* as given by Dr. Bowerbank from specimens collected in the same or a neighboring locality before 1863.

With this form was found another, probably altogether sessile, consisting of an intertexture of stout fusiform acerate skeleton spicules, abruptly pointed, coarsely spined, except near the extremities, spines subconical, acute; dermal spicules absent or undiscovered; statospheres without granular coating, some of them exhibiting a few misplaced, irregular, or malformed birotulate spicules, the distinguishing feature of which is the prolongation of the familiar boss upon the outer surface of each rotule into a long acuminate spine, in line with, and a continuation of the shaft. He suggested for this species, provisionally, the name *Meyenia acuminata*.

The exceptional features referred to above, as marking this collection of sponges were: *First*, the fact that all the statospheres, whether belonging to the genus *Spongilla* or *Meyenia*, were *smooth*, that is without a granular or cellular "crust;" *second*, the apparent absence of dermal spicules in both and the abnormal character of those belonging to the statospheres. The appearance is not infrequent, but has, so far as known, heretofore been limited to the genus *Spongilla*. The recurrence of the same feature in the associated genus *Meyenia*, coupled with the fact that many of the birotulates upon its statospheres, were imperfect, the rays being more or less aborted, approximating their shape to that of the spined fusiform acerates of *Spongilla*, gave rise to the suggestion that here, possibly, had been, not merely a mechanical mixture by inter- or super-position of species, but an organic hybridization produced by the flowing together of the amœboid particles of which the sponges are composed, or even by a fertilization of the ova of one by the spermatozoids of the other.

Several facts indicative of the probability that such hybridization may take place were adduced, and the further discussion of the subject deferred until an examination of the living sponge in its native locality, or experiments upon those germinated in confinement, could be made.

It is important to notice that the specimens received were collected in February, when the sarcode matter had nearly all been washed away, with, probably, accompanying changes in the presence or numbers of the smaller spiculæ.