

II. NOTES ON FRESHWATER SPONGES.

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XII.—DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES FROM CAPE COMORIN.

The sponge described below was discovered by Mr. R. S. N. Pillay of the Trivandrum Museum in a tank near Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of the Indian Peninsula. I have examined several specimens.

Genus SPONGILLA.

Subgenus Stratospongilla, Annandale.

Spongilla ultima, sp. nov.

Sponge hard and strong, forming a thin layer on solid objects, of a pale green colour (dry); the oscula small but rendered conspicuous by the deep radiating furrows that surround them; external surface of the sponge rough but not spiny.

Skeleton forming a compact but somewhat irregular reticulation, in which the radiating fibres are not very much more distinct than the transverse ones; a considerable amount of almost colourless spongin present.

Spicules.—Skeleton spicules smooth, stout, amphioxous, as a rule straight or nearly straight, not infrequently inflated in the middle or otherwise irregular. No flesh spicules. Gemmule spicules variable in size, belonging to practically every type and exhibiting practically every abnormality possible in the genus, the majority being more or less sausage-shaped and having a roughened surface, but others being cruciform, spherical, subspherical, rosette-like, needle-like, bifid or even trifid at one extremity.

Gemmules adherent, spherical, large, each covered by two distinct layers of horizontal spicules; the outer layer intermixed with skeleton spicules and often containing relatively large siliceous spheres, a large proportion of the spicules being irregular in shape; the spicules of the inner layer much more regular and as a rule sausage-shaped. The outer layer is contained in a chitinous membrane, which spreads out over the base of the sponge. The foraminal tubules short and straight.

This sponge is allied to *S. bombayensis*, from which it is distinguished not only by the abnormal characters of its gemmule spicules and the absence of flesh spicules, but also by the form of its skeleton spicules and the structure of its skeleton.