

The genus was first founded by Eschscholtz in 1822 for the reception of three species taken during von Kotzebue's voyage round the world; at present it appears from the investigations of Dr. F. Buchanan White¹ to contain eleven species, of which six were discovered by the Challenger. The allied genus *Halobatodes* contains four species, two being new, but only one is certainly known to be marine.

They appear to live upon the juices of dead animals floating upon the surface. Some species, at all events, have the power of diving, and have been seen to do so in order to avoid being captured.

Their distribution is very wide, for they occur in all the great oceans. Mr. Murray noted their occurrence twenty-one times in the Atlantic between the parallels of 35° N. and 20° S., and thirty-eight times in the Pacific between lats. 37° N. and 23° S., so that they would seem to be confined to the warmer waters of the ocean. The region between the eastern part of the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific seems to be the metropolis of the genus, nine out of the eleven known species occurring there, and five nowhere else; it is also interesting to note that the species of the genus *Halobatodes* occur in this region.

It is very desirable that those who have the opportunity should make further investigations into their life-history and habits, especially with respect to:—

1. Their food and the manner in which it is seized and retained.
2. The manner of locomotion, and especially whether all species have the power of diving. Experiments might also be made as to the effects of compulsory submergence.
3. What enemies they have, and what means of defence.
4. The use of the peculiar tubercles on the head, the perforated tubercle of the abdomen, and the ribbon-like process connected with the claws of the tarsi.

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

On the 17th August, at noon, the island of Tongariki, one of the New Hebrides, was sighted ahead, and shortly after Makura Island on the port bow. A course was shaped to pass between Makura and Three Hills Island, the wind being a fresh trade, with numerous rain squalls. At 5.45 P.M., having cleared the channel between Makura and Three Hills Island, sail was shortened to topsails, and the vessel "hove to" on the port tack. The weather, being thick and rainy, was not very favourable for making observations, but, so far as could be ascertained, the islands of Tongariki, Bunina, Three Hills, Makura, Two Hills, and Monument, are correctly placed relatively to each other in Admiralty chart 1380, and the positions assigned them cannot be far out.

The island of Tongariki has a high solitary peak on its northeast end, while the western part is flat-topped and about 400 feet high; Bunina Island is round-backed, and about

¹ F. Buchanan White, Report on the Pelagic Hemiptera, Zool. Chall. Exp., part xix., 1883.