

the peak. They would not move until actually pushed off the nest. The young, both of boobies and noddies, are very brave, and scream and strike out hard at anything put near them. Our spaniels could not tackle the young boobies, but after one or two pecks fought quite shy of them; and even the little noddies kept the dogs pretty well at bay, twisting round in the nests and always showing front. Natural selection has no doubt brought about this bravery in the young, to protect them from their constant enemies, the crabs.

Around all the nests were small flying fish, which are brought by the old birds in their crops, and ejected for food for the young or for the females whilst sitting. Fitzroy visited St. Paul's Rocks on February 16th; Ross on May 29th; we on August 29th; on all these occasions eggs and young birds were found. Hence, breeding goes on all the year round.

The only other terrestrial inhabitants of the rocks besides the birds are insects and spiders which prey on them. They are most of them to be found by breaking up the nests of the noddies. Darwin* mentions the following: A pupiparous fly (*Olfersia*), living on the booby as a parasite. This fly belongs to the same group as the curious *Nycteribia*, so common on the bodies of fruit-eating bats. The group is remarkable for the fact that the female, instead of laying, like most insects, eggs which produce grubs, produces a chrysalis, from which the fly in a short time emerges.

A Staphylinid beetle (*Quedius*), a tick, a small brown moth, belonging to a genus which feeds on feathers, and a wood louse, living beneath the guano, and spiders, complete Darwin's list. We found two species of spiders, which cover the rock in some places with their web, and in addition to the insects noted by Darwin, the larva of a moth, apparently a *Tortrix*, and a small *Dipter*. Von Willemoes Suhm also found a *Chelifer*, but could not find either the beetle or wood-louse.

Besides these there are of course to be reckoned the lice, parasites usual upon the two birds, and the list of air-breathing inhabitants seems then complete.

St. Paul's Rocks being close on the equator, the sun was extremely powerful, and the white guano-covered rocks reflected the radiant heat-rays with the same effect as does a snow surface in Switzerland. Our faces were severely sunburnt. At the base of the "Booby's hill" is a flat expanse of rock with tide pools upon it, in which were shoals of small fish, a black and yellow banded *Chaetodon* and numerous small gobies. The sides of the pools were covered with a grey *Palythoa*, a sea anemone, forming colonies of the same species apparently as

* Darwin, "Journal of Researches," p. 10.