

Localities.—Zebu, Philippine group. On the reefs. Depth and conditions not recorded.

Kandavu, Fiji Islands. On the reefs. Depth and conditions not recorded.

Remarks.—These examples appear to me to accord with the description given by Perrier¹ of certain specimens which he has studied and referred to Gray's species. There is, however, no type of *Acanthaster ellisii* in the British Museum; it is therefore extremely doubtful to what form that author applied the name. In the examples under notice the spines are all covered with a thick, closely fitting, fleshy, whitish membrane, which causes them to appear perfectly smooth and glistening in the specimens preserved in spirit, and when the membrane is removed the spine is found to be perfectly smooth. When a spine is dried, however, it appears covered with regularly disposed granules which produce a roughness similar to that assigned as a characteristic feature in *Acanthaster echinites*. The granules, however, are much less pronounced, and are devoid of the central hair-like needle often found in well-preserved examples of *Acanthaster echinites*. The "roughness" of the spines in the Challenger examples is undoubtedly produced by the drying out of granular deposits contained in the investing membranous sheath, and I am inclined to believe from the examination of dried specimens of *Acanthaster echinites* that the same explanation will hold good for that form.

The pedicellariæ in the examples from Zebu and Kandavu appear shorter than in specimens from Mauritius which have been referred to *Acanthaster echinites*, a circumstance also mentioned by Perrier as a character of the form he refers to *Acanthaster ellisii*. The colour is a bright whitish violet.

Notwithstanding the differences noted above, I feel grave doubt as to whether they are of sufficient importance to warrant the specific separation of the form from *Acanthaster echinites*; but with the material at present available I am not in a position to fully discuss the question.

Subfamily MITHRODINÆ, Viguier, 1878.

Genus *Mithrodia*, Gray.

Mithrodia, Gray, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 1840, vol. vi. p. 287.

Heresaster, Michelin, Revue Zoologique, 1844, p. 173.

This well-marked form, which has given so much trouble to classifiers, is essentially an inhabitant of tropical seas. Notwithstanding its wide area of geographical distribution, the specific character is maintained with great constancy, and the genus shows a very limited range of morphological plasticity, three species only having been defined.

¹ Révis. Stell. Mus., p. 99 (*Archives de Zool. expér.*, 1875, t. iv. p. 363).