

fishes, because it has helped me to clear up the nature of certain young fishes, of which I have known since the year 1860, without knowing to what genus they should be referred. That these young fishes are pelagic is amply proved by the three specimens in the British Museum, all of which were caught in the open sea.

1. The largest specimen is 26 mm. long, and was obtained in the tow-net on the passage from Australia to the Cape of Good Hope, by J. B. Godfrey, Esq., who however omitted to note the exact locality where it was captured. This is the specimen which I mentioned in the year 1860 in the Catalogue of Fishes, vol. ii. p. 415, as possibly representing the young stage of *Mene maculata*.

2. A small specimen, 18 mm. long, was obtained by the Challenger Expedition in July 1874, on the passage from Sydney to Wellington.

3. Finally, for the third specimen, which is only 15 mm. long, we are indebted to Mr. Wykeman Perry, who collected so many valuable specimens, whilst serving on board H.M.S. "Pearl," under the late Commodore Goodenough. This specimen was obtained in lat. 34° S., long. 12° E., in August 1873, that is, in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope.

The general form of these fishes may be best seen from the accompanying figure. They are characterised by their extremely compressed body, the chest and the abdomen forming a prominent sharp edge. The body is covered by a thick layer of silvery pigment, the largest specimen besides showing distinct cycloid scales; the lateral line runs parallel to the profile of the back, which is much less curved than the lower outline of the body. The back is occupied by a long dorsal fin, the anterior portion of which is spinous. The anal fin is also long, preceded by three spines; the ventral fins small, rudimentary, inserted at a considerable distance behind the root of the pectoral and likewise at a similar distance from the vent.

The head is of moderate size without any armature; eye of moderate size, the mouth small and obliquely turned upwards.

Although I have no doubt that these specimens are the young of *Platystethus*, I consider it quite possible that the three specimens belong to as many distinct species on account of the difference in the numbers of the fin rays. On the other hand we have to take into consideration, that owing to the very young age of these specimens, the posterior fin rays may still be undeveloped. In the largest of these young specimens, which is figured, the dorsal fin is composed of eighteen¹ spines and twenty-nine soft rays. The anal is armed with three spines of which the third is very short, as is also the case in the two other specimens; of soft rays I count eleven. I found it impossible to ascertain the number of dorsal spines in the two smaller specimens, without lacerating them in a manner which would have impaired their utility in the future, but the soft rays were

¹ A comparison with the specimens more recently acquired has shown me that a number of the rays in the dorsal and anal fins, which I formerly in the largest specimen considered to be soft, are in reality spinous.