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bably is connected with that of the islands to the north, for I find Java is also a habitat of several ferns that I have found. At Christmas I am to take holy orders, and in April next to be left at Sans Christoval for a month or two. During this time I also hope to visit all the southern Solomon Islands, and after that to accompany Bishop Patterson on his annual visit to the other groups. On my return, I hope to have something to write about that will interest you, and perhaps some specimens to send.

"The coco nut is planted, the banana, yam, taro, a sweet potato (not Convolulus batatas), and a herbaceous plant used as a vegetable. There are scarcely any native fruits, but several sorts of nuts. Bread fruit grows best in the Banks's group. At one island of this group thirty varieties of yams are named. In the Banks' Islands and northern New Hebrides, shell only is used for adzes. In the Solomon Islands stone for adzes and knives. No pottery is made at any. At Santa Cruz a loom is used in weaving their elegant mats, and they seem, in other ways, more advanced than their neighbours. I suppose that they use stone, for their word for iron is the Maori name for a stone adze. I have only met with two tree ferns, one a polypody and one a marattia; both are very common. Palms are very plentiful in the northern islands of the Solomon group. The areca nut is chewed there and at Santa Cruz, but they become fewer as we go south. I have not seen the areca in the Banks' Islands, nor the sago in the New Hebrides, where indeed I have only seen one palm beside the coco nut. A club moss and the fern Asplenium nidus, common here (Norfolk Island), are found throughout these groups. It is possible that the tree fern may be the same, I have not got a piece of the island fern with me to compare.

"The natives of the Solomon and Santa Cruz groups are very much more civilized, although perhaps fiercer than the Banks' islanders. This is easily accounted for by the difference of race of these islanders,—the Polynesian is an active, energetic race, the Melanesian more indolent and uninventive. The canoes of the Solomon Islands are beautiful in design and workmanship, and, like their houses and weapons, highly ornamented. The only way of procuring fire that I have heard of in use amongst them, is by rubbing one piece of wood on another. M. J. Atkins."

III.—GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

RHINOCEROS HORNS.—Letter from Edward Blyth, Esq., formerly Curator of the Museum of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

"London, 16*th March* 1868.

"As in the first No. of your 'Journal' (p. 70), you called attention to some remarks which I made, in the course of a discussion at one of the Scientific Meetings of the Zoological Society, upon the occasional shedding or loss by violence, followed by the renewal, of the horn or horns of a rhinoceros, I may mention that the particular instance adduced was given upon the authority of the Count Alexis Bobrensky, of Moscow; and that my suspicion of the occasional occurrence of such a phenomena arose from my obtaining the facial portion of the head, with the two horns attached to the skin, of a recently killed male of R. Sumatranus, which I supposed at the time to have been rather a juvenile animal, from the small size of the horns. It was obtained in the Yunzalia district of the province of Martaban, by means of a heavy falling stake, such as the natives set for tigers and other large game (as represented in C. J. Anderson's 'Lake Ngami' 2d edition, p. 258); and I was already aware of the superb development which the horns of this small species of rhinoceros attain in some instances, as exemplified by the beautiful specimen of an anterior horn in the British Museum, upon which Dr Gray founded his supposed R. Crossii (*Proc. Zool. Soc.* 1854, p. 250, where a figure of it is supplied). That horn, which is very highly curved, measures 32 inches along its front, and is 17 inches in span from head to tip. I have also recently seen

a fine pair of horns attached to the head, in the possession of my friend Colonel Fytche (now Chief Commissioner of British Burma), and those upon the specimen obtained in Upper Martaban were short and small as in an adolescent animal. On my return to Calcutta I had the specimen in question macerated, and the skin, with the horns upon it, detached from the bone; and then I was surprised to find that the nasals were completely anchylosed and united, and that the animal accordingly had been a tolerably old one, notwithstanding that its horns were so little developed, and I consequently inferred that the particular individual had probably shed and renewed its horns, however unusual such an occurrence might be. I have now to call attention to the tendency which probably all of the existent species of rhinoceros have to develop a rudimentary or small horn on the forehead. This may now be observed in the instance of the large female of R. indicus, in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, and when I called the attention of Mr A. D. Bartlett (the superintendent of the establishment) to the circumstance, he surprised me much by telling me that the present appearance is a second one of the kind, the animal having broken off a previous frontal hornlet, which he afterwards shewed me. On the occasion of its being violently broken away from the skin, I was informed by him that the animal bled profusely from the place, the blood streaming down its face; but that the site soon healed over in the usual way, and now a new hornlet has begun to shew. That broken off from the skin is of a subquadrate form, measuring about an inch every way, and the summit of it is ground off by attrition, or it would have been at least half an inch longer. Sir T. Stamford Raffles, in his paper on the Animals of Sumatra (published in the thirteenth volume of the 'Transactions of the Linnæan Society'), remarks of R. Sumatranus that 'The natives assert that a third horn is sometimes met with; and in one of the young specimens procured, an indication of the kind was observed.' In Mr C. J. Anderson's 'Lake Ngami' the same is remarked of one or more of the ordinarily two-horned rhinoceros of Africa. This traveller writes:—'I have met persons who told me that they had killed rhinoceroses with three horns; but in all such cases (and they have been but few) the third or hindmost horn is so small as to be scarcely perceptible'. It is remarkable that Linnæus referred to rhinoceros bearing a third horn. It seems a not unlikely character to have been developed more frequently in some of the extinct species of the genus. As regards the horns of the Asiatic two-horned species (R. Sumatranus), I have seen a pair of them, beautifully carved and polished, and set with the bases upwards, and on a parallel, in a carved black wooden stand, similar to those upon which Chinese metallic mirrors are mounted, and the Chinamen give such extravagant prices for fine specimens that they are exceedingly difficult to be got hold of; and hence their extreme rarity in mansions. The anterior horn of Colonel Pytche's specimen (before referred to), which is not half the length of that in the British Museum, is worth about 50 rupees, or £5, as I was assured by him; the price increasing, as usual, with the size and length. Both R. Sumatranus and R. Sondaicus, are extensively diffused over the Indo-Chinese countries, and I have been credibly informed by a gentleman, who saw, when in the province, the two horns upon the preserved skin of the head, that an example of the former which had been killed was regarded even in Asia as an exceedingly great rarity. A full-grown female has recently been captured alive near the station of Chittagong, which became moderately tame in the course of a few weeks, and it is probable that we shall see it ere long in the Zoological Gardens. EDWARD BLYTH."