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ANTS FROM THE SOCIETY ISLANDS *

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INTRODUCTION

The ants collected by the Pacific Entomological Survey in the Marquesas Islands and Society Islands were submitted to me for study. A report on the collection from the Marquesas has already been published.¹

Previous records of ants from Society Islands are limited to a few which I published in 1908,² to some scattered references in the myrmecological literature, and to the recent and much more extensive account³ based on material collected by Cheesman in 1925.

Of 38 different forms of ants now known from Society Islands and the Marquesas, 19 are common to the two archipelagoes, 15 are recorded from Society Islands and not from the Marquesas, and 4 from the Marquesas and not from Society Islands. With the single exception of *Odontomachus haematoda* Linnaeus, all the forms cited in the following list are small or very small ants, capable of dispersal among the islands by natural agencies, such as violent winds or in native canoes.

Some of Miss Cheesman's observations⁴ on the abundance of ants and their distribution on the islands which she visited are worth quoting:

Ants were extremely abundant upon all the above islands, especially in the inhabited areas. One species would be usually preponderant, but not always the same species; in some cases the dominant species would differ in different localities of the same island. Upon all of those of the Society Islands *Pheidole oceanica nigriscapa* variety *tahitiana*, new species, and *Monomorium floricola* swarmed on the coasts, firmly established as house-ants in all the villages visited. *Pheidole megacephala* Fabricius held a like position on the Marquesas Islands. On the atoll Fakarava, *Solenopsis geminata* variety *rufa* Jerdon was the most abundant about the huts; *Paratrechina bourbonica* subspecies *bengalensis* Forel, although also abundant, was not seen near habitations. On the shores of Tahiti and Bora Bora very large and vigorous colonies of *Solenopsis geminata* variety *rufa* Jerdon, *Anoplolepis longipes* and *Pheidole oceanica nigriscapa* variety *tahitiana* Santschi, were in close proximity—the last always predominant. In other parts of the world the two former species have a name for displacing one another (Wheeler, "Ants," p. 155, 1910). Of those species occurring in the interior of the islands, *Cardiocondyla emeryi* Forel and *Plagiolepis augusti* Emery were taken only on the northern coast-hills

¹ Wheeler, W. M., Ants from the Marquesas Islands: B. P. Bishop Mus., Bull. 98, Pacific Ent. Survey Pub. 1, art. 16, 1932.

² Wheeler, W. M., The ants of Moorea, Society Islands: Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., Bull. 24, pp. 165-167, 1908.

³ Cheesman, L. E., and Crawley, W. C., A contribution towards the insect fauna of French Oceania: Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., 10th ser., vol. 2, pt. 3—Formicoidea, pp. 514-525, 1928.

⁴ Op. cit., pp. 514-515.

* Pacific Entomological Survey Publication 6, article 3. Issued December 23, 1932.

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