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The Ants (Hym. Formicidae) **WILLIAM L. BROWN**
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MAURITIUS is an Island in the Indian Ocean and lies 550 miles east of Madagascar. It is one of the three Mascarene Islands, the other two being Reunion or Bour Bon, and Rodriques. Somewhat triangular in shape, it is 36 miles long and 23 miles in breadth.

The island is of volcanic origin, and the rocks consist of basalt and lavas. The rivers are small, which in the dry season, are little more than brooks; but in the wet season they become raging torrents. The principal stream, Grand Reivère, is only 10 miles long.

In the south there is a very deep lake, Grand Bassin, the extinct crater of an ancient volcano.

The island is surrounded by coral reefs, and possesses beautiful scenery and picturesque mountains; 2711 feet above the sea is the highest level. Le Pouce mountain is so called because it is supposed to resemble the human thumb in shape.

The scenery is delightfully described by Bernardin Saint-Pierre in his charming story 'Paul et Virginie.'

There are extensive plains in the interior.

Mauritius was unknown until the year 1505, when it was discovered by a Portuguese navigator, one Mascarenas. There appear to have been no inhabitants before that time. Little use was made of the island until 1598, when the Dutch took possession, and named it "Mauritius" in honour of their Count, Maurice of Nassau.

In 1715-1767 the French Government assumed control, and re-named it "Ile de France." In 1810 it was captured by the British, and has remained a British Colony to this day; being again called Mauritius.

Being an oceanic island of small size, the fauna is very limited in extent. There are a certain number of mammals and reptiles, chiefly introduced; and the birds are similar to those of Madagascar. Of extinct animals, several species of large fossil tortoises have been discovered, unlike any present known genera. The remains of two or three birds have also been found; chief of these, of course, being the celebrated Dodo (*Didus ineptus*)—immortalized in Lewis Carrol's 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'; dear to all children's hearts.