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THE DAILY BULLETIN

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Office. Queen Street,
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THE MUNGOOSE'S MISSION.

At the present time, when the inhabitants of the several Australian colonies are searching for some means of diminishing the vast numbers of the rabbits, which are devouring the produce of the soil, the history of the acclimatization and utilization of the mongoose in the island of Jamaica, which was related in a paper read by W. Bancroft Esq., at the meeting of the Zoological Society on Tuesday last, may not be without interest. A few years since the growth of crops in the island was so seriously interfered with by the number of rats that land was allowed to pass out of cultivation, an expenditure of from £200 to £300 annually on several of the estates failing to keep down the numbers of the three species of these destructive rodents—the brown and black rat, and the cane pine rat (*Muscaharivorus*).

Several attempts to introduce animals destructive to the rats had been made, but without success. The raffle an (*fronica omnivora*) was effectual in certain localities, but it was equally efficacious in destroying native birds, chickens, puppies, and even occasionally killed calves. The Aqua toads, as a remedy, proved as bad as the disease, as they killed all ground birds, chickens and eggs. Ferrets were also introduced, there being no musteline animal native to the island; but they were destroyed by chigoes. Fox terriers were found useless, as they were cut by the serrated edges of the leaves of the sugarcane. In 1872, B. Esquent introduced nine mongooses, four males and five females, one of the latter with young, direct from India. These were distributed, and in a few months had bred freely. So great was the destruction of rats effected by these animals, that in two years the expenditure for the extermination of rats had ceased, as they were not only disseminated by the introducer, but the young mongooses were trapped alive by the negroes and sold at one shilling each, the original expense of their introduction being about £1 per head. The beneficial effect of their introduction has been variously estimated at sums varying from £100,000 to £150,000 a year.

In 1875 the growth of cocoa was almost impossible, the exports of (Continued on page 4.)

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