

## NOTES AND NEWS.

THE TEXT relating to Plate III, in the present number of 'The Auk,' will be found in the January number of this volume (XIII, pp. 25, 26).

DR. JUAN GUNDLACH, an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died in Havana, Cuba, March 14, 1896, at the age of 85 years. Dr. Gundlach was born at Marburg, Germany, in 1811, where he was educated, and in 1839 went to Cuba, where he resided during the remainder of his life. For nearly fifty years he was a recognized authority on the ornithology of Cuba. Some of his earlier papers appeared in the *Boston Journal of Natural History* (1857) and the *Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York* (1858), in which he described various new species of Cuban birds. His principal contributions to Cuban ornithology, entitled 'Beiträge zur Ornithologie Cubas,' and 'Neue Beiträge zur Ornithologie Cubas, nach eignen 30 jährigen Beobachtungen zusammengestellt,' were published in the 'Journal für Ornithologie' (the first, 1854, pp. lxxvii-lxxxvii, 1855, pp. 465-480, 1856, pp. 1-16, 97-112, 337-352, 417-432, 1857, pp. 225-242 [see also, 1859, pp. 294-299, 347-351]; and the second, 1871, pp. 265-295, 353-378, 1872, pp. 401-432, 1874, pp. 113-166, 286-303, 1875, pp. 293-340, 353-407). He also published 'Beitrag zur Ornithologie der Insel Portorico', in the same journal (1874, pp. 304-315), and 'Neue Beiträge zur Ornithologie der Insel Portorico' (1878, pp. 157-194). He also published in Spanish an elaborate paper on the birds of Porto Rico, under the title 'Apuntes para la Fauna Puerto-Riqueña' (*Anal. de la Soc. Esp. de Hist. Nat.* VII, 1878, Aves, pp. 141-422), and papers on the mammals of Cuba and Porto Rico, besides various minor papers on the ornithology of these islands.

His researches and writings, however, were not restricted to mammals and birds, his entomological publications being quite extensive, and he published also on other branches of natural history.

Dr. Gundlach was a friend and correspondent of Baird, Brewer, and Lawrence, and was known through correspondence or personally to many of the younger American ornithologists. He was a naturalist in the fullest sense of the word, and retained his enthusiasm for his favorite pursuits to the last.<sup>1</sup> His extensive collections in all departments of Cuban natural history he deposited sometime since in the Havana Institute.

CLARENCE A. SMITH, an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died in New York City, May 6, 1896, at the age of twenty-two years. Though he had published but little on ornithology he was a keen observer and an expert collector, and was possessed of an extended

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<sup>1</sup>See *Auk*, IX, 1892, pp. 471-473. 'In Cuba with Dr Gundlach,' by Charles B. Cory.

knowledge of birds derived from his field experiences in various parts of the United States and Mexico. His valuable collection of exceptionally well-prepared bird skins and eggs has been presented to the American Museum of Natural History.

THROUGH the enterprise of Mr. Charles B. Cory, Palm Beach, Florida, has a museum of Natural History, devoted especially to the fauna of Florida. At the suggestion of Mr. H. M. Flagler, the erection of a building for this purpose was begun some two years ago, and was soon ready for occupation, the building being a wooden structure, 40 by 100 feet, and two stories in height. It already contains all of the Florida mammals but two, and a nearly complete collection of the birds of Florida, mounted after approved modern methods. It includes ten large groups, devoted to the Panther, Alligators and Crocodiles, a Heron rookery, and various other characteristic Florida birds. While the Museum is devoted primarily to the Vertebrate Zoölogy of Florida it will also include the insects and shells, the intention being to bring together a complete representation of the animal life of Florida. A prominent feature is a collection of the implements and costumes of the present Seminole Indians. It is proposed to add later an Aquarium, devoted mainly to the fresh-water fishes of the State. At present the Museum is open free to the public during certain hours each day, but when completed will be free only on certain days, a small admittance fee being charged on other days.

We have received the prospectus of a new monthly illustrated ornithological journal, 'The Osprey', published by the Osprey Company, Galesburg, Ill., under the editorship of Walter A. Johnson, Dr. A. C. Murchison and Chester Barlow.

'THE NIDIOLOGIST' has again changed its place of publication, having returned to its former home, Alameda, California, after a short but successful career in New York City. We trust the change will not detract from its future usefulness, or diminish the interest of its pages.

BY A recent Act of Congress the name of the Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy of the United States Department of Agriculture, under the direction of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, as Chief of the Division, has been changed to the much more descriptive and appropriate title of 'Biological Survey,' the change of name to go into effect July 1, 1896. It is gratifying to have the character of the important work Dr. Merriam has for some years been conducting so successfully recognized officially by the Congress.

RESPECTING Mr. D. G. Elliot's expedition to Africa, mentioned in a former number of 'The Auk' (XIII, p. 196) we quote the following from the June issue of 'The National Geographic Magazine' (VII, p. 219);

“ Consul Masterson reports that Prof. D. G. Elliot and Messrs. Akeley and Dodson arrived at Aden, April 14, where they procured 70 Somalis, 80 camels, and 20 horses and mules. A week later they crossed to Berbera, on the Somali coast. An absence of 10 months is planned, during which they will cross Somali into Gallaland and pass to the south of the Juba River. The main object of the journey is the collection of mammals, but no effort will be spared to make the zoölogical collection varied and complete.”

THE EDITOR of ‘Natural Science,’ in commenting (Nat. Sci., April, 1896, p. 218) on the discussion on zoölogical nomenclature held by the Zoölogical Society of London at its meeting of March 3 last, observes: “The discussion turned chiefly upon the following questions:—First, may the same generic names ever be used for both animals and plants? Secondly, may the same term be used for the generic and trivial name of a species, as in the well-known instance of *Scomber scomber*? Thirdly, are we to adopt as our starting-point the tenth edition of Linné’s *Systema Naturæ* in preference to the twelfth edition? These questions are answered in the affirmative by the German code, and in the negative by the original Stricklandian. We do not propose to discuss them here: it is natural that there should still be found, especially among the older zoologists of this country, many to support the old-established British practices; in this, as in all other matters of nomenclature, convenience, not principle, is concerned, and it cannot be gainsaid that the general usage of zoologists, at all events in other parts of the world, becomes daily more and more in harmony with the rules adopted by the German Society.”

He advocates the preparation of a complete and correct list of the names of all animal species, fossil as well as recent, and adds, “then it would at all events be perfectly possible for the zoologists of the world to accept that list, and to say, ‘Whether these names be right or wrong according to this or that code of nomenclature, we do not know and we do not care; but we bind ourselves to accept them in their entirety, and we hereby declare that the date when this list was closed for the press shall henceforward be the date adopted as the starting-point for our nomenclature.’”

“We have” he continues, “put this proposition in a broad manner; there are, of course, numerous minor points to be taken into consideration. The preparation of a mere list would be an enormous undertaking: we learn from Dr. David Sharp and the workers on the *Zoological Record* that there are 386,000 recent species; no one has reckoned the number of extinct species. Some such work as the ‘Index generum et specierum animalium,’ now being compiled with a minimum of support and under constant difficulties by Mr. Charles Davies Sherborn, must form the basis of any such synopsis as that here proposed. The first duty of naturalists is to help Mr. Sherborn, who works at the British

Museum under a Committee of the British Association. We also have to consider what is to be done when our list is completed. First of all, it must constantly be kept up to date. It seems to us that some restriction will have to be laid upon the place and manner of publication of new specific names, and we would suggest that, when the time comes, no specific name should be recognized unless it be entered by the author at some central office, together with a properly published copy of the work in which the description appears. The name would then be checked, dated, and placed at once in the Index."

This is very good, except the suggestion that "some restriction will have to be laid upon the place and manner of publication of new specific names," etc., which we consider both unwise and impracticable; for an author publishing in well-known scientific journals and the proceedings, etc., of scientific societies should not, and indeed could not, be deprived of recognition simply because, through accident or carelessness, or even disinclination, he should fail duly to report at "some central office," of record, without overthrowing the hitherto universally recognized rules regarding what constitutes proper publication. It is enough that he conform to these, although for his own interest, he might well send copies of his publications to designated offices of record.

In the May number of the same publication (Nat. Sci., May, 1896, p. 302), the editor has the following judicious comment, in reply to a correspondent, respecting the 'Law of Priority.' "Obviously," he says, "some such law is a necessity, if we are to avoid the multiplication of synonyms or to have any attempt at a world-wide set of names. The difficulties in the application of the law are of two kinds. First, is it to be retrospective? and, if not, where is the line to be drawn, and who is to draw it? Secondly, when authors have published unintelligible or doubtful descriptions, who is to be the judge? These matters cannot be left to the individual caprice of naturalists, even so distinguished as Mr. Cunningham. It is for this reason that we made the proposal published in our last number. We say,—let the Law of Priority work! in most cases it will answer. Then let the doubtful cases be adjudicated on by specialists appointed *ad hoc*, and let their decision be accepted. Fixity of nomenclature of course is not anticipated, for that could be the result only of the stagnation of systematic zoology. Nevertheless, the acceptance of our proposal would do away with the changeableness that depends on mere whim, or on literature rather than on fact. We realize, indeed we have insisted, that the full carrying out of our ideas cannot be yet; the index to all published names must first be completed."

CORRESPONDENTS may be interested to know that the editor of 'The Auk' will be absent on a European tour till about September 1. Letters concerning 'The Auk' may be addressed to the Assistant Editor, Mr. Frank M. Chapman.