SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1880.

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN TAXIDERMISTS.

BY WM. T. HORNADAY.

It is high time that the art of taxidermy should receive a new impetus from some source, if it is ever to rise above the level of an undignified, and rather unattractive trade. It is by no means universally looked upon as a fine art, it is certainly not patronized as such, and, until it is developed to a far higher state of perfection than it is at present, we are by no means sure it deserves to be. At present most taxidermists are fiercely jealous of each other and outsiders, and guard their little knowledge as a miser hoards his gold; and yet not a single taxidermist in America earns a competence, and no other position when once lost in one place is so hard to obtain in another. Taxidermists are agreed upon one point, and only one, viz.: that their art is one requiring as much anatomical knowledge and executive skill as either painting or sculpture, while each man, with but few exceptions is firmly convinced past all argument that *his* work is equalled by few and surpassed by none.

At present, taxidemy is not a popular art; as a profession, it is remunerative to the select few only, and even to those in a very moderate degree. But such results are but merited, and for this taxidermists have themselves to thank. If painters and sculptors had always been as narrow-minded, jealous, and absurdly exclusive of their knowledge as we have ever been (with but few exceptions) their art would stand no higher to-day than ours. I have known of taxidermists, who, when visited by other members of the profession, would invariably stop working the moment the visitor appeared and remain idle during his entire stay even though their specimen *spoiled*. Such men must think they are the only taxidermists in the world.

A great artist of any other description is ever ready and anxious to *learn*, even from the meanest sources sometimes; but your taxidermist soon knows too much to be taught anything by anybody, and to offer him any advice, or make an unfavorable criticism is to insult him. As a rule he refuses to teach his art to anyone, save at most fabulous prices. As a result of all this, taxidermy is not a popular art and not a tithe of its capabilities have yet been developed. Taxidermists have never combined to build up their art; from the very foundation, there have been no exhibitions, no well directed competition, no intelligent verdict as to the merits of this man or that, no interchange of ideas, no general and hearty dissemination of knowledge bearing upon this subject. The knowledge of the art is confined to a few, and so is the patronage.

The Society of American Taxidermists, the first of the kind ever organized, has been formed for the avowed purpose of developing the art of taxidermy, and elevating it to the position it should occupy beside the kindred arts of painting and sculpture. It has been formed not for the benefit of a few individuals, but with the higher, broader purpose of developing the possibilities of the art, and raising it to the level of a dignified and justly remunerative profession. Its members are practical, determined men who enter upon the work before them with all professional jealousy laid aside, and with the determination to work as one man. They propose to diffuse as widely as possible a correct knowledge of the methods employed in taxidermy, and by their work to create in the public a proper appreciation of their art as such. They believe that by combination, sharp but well regulated competition, and a few years of patient, earnest work and self improvement they will, in a measure, accomplish their object.

The Society has been started by the professional taxidermists in Prof. Ward's famous establishment at Rochester, N. Y., and already includes many well-known specialists in every branch of the art. It has received most cordial letters of encouragement and endorsement from such eminent scientists and patrons of taxidermy as Prof. Henry A. Ward, of Rochester, Prof. J. A. Allen, of Cambridge, Dr. Elliott Coues, of the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. G. E. Manigault, of Charleston, S. C. Each of the above-mentioned gentlemen is an Honorary Member of the society.

The organization is steadily attracting candidates for membership from various parts of the United States, liberal minded professionals, and ambitious and enterprising amateurs who are only too glad of so fair an opportunity to follow up an attractive art.

The Society is to be national in all respects, and it is to be hoped it will yet wield an influence which will be felt in foreign countries. Indeed its members look forward to the day when there may be held under its auspices in this country a grand international exhibition of works in taxidermy.

The Society proposes to hold its first annual meeting and exhibition in the city of Rochester, on or about Dec. 20th of this year, at which a corps of carefully selected judges shall critically examine the objects in the exhibition and award the honors. Of course the judges will not be ordinary members of the society, and absolute fairness will be guaranteed. The objects entered for the exhibition will be divided into the following classes, which embrace work in every branch of the art:

A. TAXIDERMY PROPER.

First—Stuffed mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes, in groups.

Second—Single specimens.

Third—Heads. (Special attention is requested to the artistic arrangement of heads, especially those of small animals).

Fourth—Skins of all kinds.

Fifth—Crustaceans, in groups.

B. MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS.

First—Animals grotesquely mounted.

Second—Ornamental articles, in which only portions of an animal are used, as fans, feather work, fire screens, rugs, footstools, etc.

President, Frederic S. Webster; Secretary, Wm. T. Hornaday. Office of the Secretary, 19 Rowley St., Rochester, N. Y.

C. ADJUNCTS TO TAXIDERMY.

Tools, eyes, materials, perches, leaves, rock-work, etc.

Already a large number of important objects are entered for exhibition, consisting chiefly of artistic groups, both large and small, and it is certain that there will be a fine display in class B, or household ornaments and decorations, most of which will be entirely new and original in design. A silver medal will be awarded to the finest single exhibit, a bronze medal to the best general exhibit, and a diploma of honor to the best exhibit in each of four natural classes, viz.: Mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes. A number of interesting papers and notes upon the various methods of taxidermy will be read at the general meeting and afterwards published in a volume as the proceedings of the society. From now until December each member will be busily engaged in putting forth all his skill and knowledge in the effort to win some of the honors offered for the highest excellence.

It is to be earnestly hoped that their vigorous and already successful movement will meet the hearty approval and co-operation of all American taxidermists, both amateur and professional, and that they will, by joining the society, and taking active part in the meetings and exhibitions, help to build up a powerful and influential organization, which is devoted to their best interests. The most unskillful amateurs are cordially welcomed as members, if they are but earnest in taking hold of the work in hand. It now remains to be seen how much liberality of mind, enthusiasm of purpose and ambitious enterprise will be awakened by this movement among American taxidermists.

DESCRIPTION OF SOME MONSTROSITIES OBSERVED IN NORTH AMERICAN COLEOPTERA.[1]

BY HORACE F. JAYNE.

The accumulation of material in some of the larger collections of Coleoptera of our fauna has suggested that a description of the more marked monstrosities might be interesting, and aid at some future time in throwing light on points of development not yet understood. I have, therefore, in this paper, described and figured those monstrosities which M. Mocquerys of Rouen, in his excellent work on Abnormal Coleoptera, calls "Monstrosities by Excess." Deformities by deficiency or incomplete development have not been considered as they do not seem of sufficient importance, and point only to accidents happening to the insects while in the larvæ or pupæ stage.

I desire to return my sincere thanks to Dr. Horn for the free use of his collection and library, for many suggestions and for kindly revising these pages; also to Dr. LeConte for the loan of specimens from his cabinet, and to Dr. Hagen for the use of specimens belonging to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge.

[1] A paper read before the Am. Ent. Soc., June, 1880.

CALOSOMA TRISTE, Lec.

Fig. 1 represents a monstrosity on the right antenna of a specimen of *Colosoma triste*, Lec. It consists in the sixth joint bearing two branches of five joints. Fig. 1a, shows the antenna greatly enlarged. The first three joints are normal; the third a little dilated at apex. The fourth is normal in length but is one-half broader at apex. When viewed from above it is distinctly pyriform. The fifth joint is also of normal length but twice the width of that of the left side and slightly broader at apex. The sixth joint is pentagonal in form, in its widest place as wide as long. The apex is obliquely truncate on its inner and outer angles, presenting two unequal faces for the insertion of the two branches. The inner or posterior facet is much smaller and from it arises that branch with the joints exactly resembling the normal antenna. The anterior or outer facet is larger and gives insertion to an anterior or outer branch of five joints; the first being short and thick the others similar to the corresponding normal joints but smaller.

The specimen is in Dr. Horn's Cabinet. Collected in California.

CYCHRUS ANGUSTICOLLIS, Fisch.

Fig. 2 represents the deformed left anterior leg of a specimen of *Cychrus angusticollis*. The femur is greatly dilated a little beyond the middle and gives off from its superior border a tubercle moderately long and blunt at tip. This may possibly indicate an attempt at the development of a second leg. The femur is then narrowed and at apex is a little larger than the apex of the normal joint. The existence of a cotyloid cavity shows the former presence, and accidental loss of the tibia.

In the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge.

METRIUS CONTRACTUS, Esch.

A monstrosity in the middle left leg of a specimen of *Metrius contractus* is shown in fig. 3. The femur bears two tibiæ; the inner one bearing two full sets of tarsal joints. The femur is normal. The outer tibia, which may be regarded as the normal one, arises from the extremity of the femur and is somewhat shorter, stouter, and more curved than the tibia of the middle right leg. The inner tibia arises from the posterior side of the femur a short distance within the tip and is articulated with it by a separate cotyloid cavity, the two cavities however are confluent as seen in fig. 3a. It is distinctly arcuate, dilated toward the apex which is obliquely truncate at each angle. From each facet thus formed arises a tarsal joint of normal length, almost contiguous at their bases, and somewhat stouter than the succeeding joints which are normal in form but shorter than those of a normal tarsus. There are four terminal spurs to this tibia, two placed external to the outer tarsus, two within the inner.

In Dr. Horn's Collection.

PASIMACHUS PUNCTULATUS, Hald.

A specimen of *Pasimachus punctulatus* has seven legs; the extra one arising from a trochanter placed between the normal trochanter and femur of the left