

SCIENCE.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1886.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

AN ADDITIONAL ARGUMENT for the preservation and care of the levees of the lower Mississippi is afforded in an unexpected way. For many years great damage to stock, and human discomfort, in those regions, have been caused by small flies known as 'buffalo gnats' (*Simulium*). Very similar flies, with similar injurious habits, have long been well known in the valley of the Danube and elsewhere; but as the species that have been studied, breed, as a rule, in streams that are clear, rapid, and rocky, it has been a question of considerable importance how the insects bred in such great quantities in the low alluvial Mississippi country, — a question whose solution might, it was hoped, afford a means of checking the increase of the pest. The present spring Dr. Riley, and two of his assistants, Mr. F. M. Webster and Mr. Otto Lugger, have succeeded in determining the habits of the two known species; and it appears that they breed in the more swiftly running portions of the smaller creeks and bayous, which are permanent, and do not dry up in midsummer. They are found attached to the masses of driftwood and leaves, which form at points, and which, by impeding the streams below, form a more rapid current at the surface. The larvae and pupae have been absolutely connected with their respective adults, and a careful study of the general character of the breeding-places already indicates that the increase of the pests of late years is indirectly due to the crevasses in the levees.

DR. SHUFELDT, in a recent pamphlet published by the U. S. bureau of education, calls attention to the needs and shortcomings of anatomical museums in this country, and presents an outline of how such museums should be formed and conducted. The subject is of no little importance, from the fact that we have so few anatomical museums that serve as useful means of instruction, or indeed for any thing except as repositories of anatomical odds and ends and curiosities, of which medical students, as a rule, make no use.

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One cause of this condition is the general indifference or neglect of comparative anatomy in medical instruction, and the non-recognition of the principle that museums, to be educational, should be largely comparative. The author rightly insists upon greater attention being given to comparative morphology as a basis of medical progress, and censures the lack of system. We are glad also to see his protest against the misleading and expensive dried preparations so common in collections.

BY THE ADDRESS of President Adams before the Cornell alumni at their sixth annual dinner recently held in New York, the controversy over what shall be the character of the university work was revived. Cornell was one of the colleges established through the benefit of the Morrill grant of 1862. The fundamental intent of that grant was the endowment in each state of at least one college where the leading object should be, "without excluding scientific and classical studies, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes." The grant to New York consisted of land scrip for 990,000 acres. This scrip was bought by Mr. Cornell for about \$500,000, and to this he added an equal sum from his own pocket. The land was located in the timber districts of Michigan, and now, at the end of twenty odd years, has realized to the college some three millions of dollars. The question is, whether the whole of this should be devoted in accordance with the original grant, or whether, on account of Mr. Cornell's additional contribution, and the large amount realized through his foresight, the college is only bound to devote a portion of the fund to education in agricultural and mechanical arts. We would call attention to what our correspondent H. N. has to say upon the matter.

SETTLEMENT OF LABOR DIFFERENCES.

WHETHER the pamphlet¹ from the pen of Mr. Joseph D. Weeks, which the Society for political education has just published, was or was not timed to the present crisis, we are not aware; but,

¹ New York, Putnam, 1886. 12°.