

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*** Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as a proof of good faith.

On request in advance, one hundred copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent.

The Editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Cats Hunting Snakes.

It was a novel idea to the writer, that of our domestic cat appearing in the capacity of a serpent-killer; but as two independent accounts have recently come to his knowledge, from competent observers, this note is sent to *Science*, partly for its interest and partly in the hope of eliciting further evidence.

A family living in southern New Jersey have a cat, not large or powerful, but very lithe and active, that has been in the habit of going off to the woods and returning with dead snakes of different species, up to three or four feet in length. After dragging it home, she would proceed to eat the snake and was often interrupted and the prey taken from her by members of the family, who were horrified at the proceeding. On one occasion, a violent flurry among the hens was noticed, and it was found to be due to the approach of a black snake, fully a yard long. The cat had reached the spot, however, before the family, and her *modus operandi* was witnessed. She attacked the snake by repeatedly springing upon it, and endeavoring to seize it with his teeth, immediately behind the head. After a few such assaults, the cat killed it, and in due time proceeded to eat it, as usual, although it was then removed.

On relating this incident in a company of scientific friends it was generally regarded as novel; but one gentleman described a precisely similar action witnessed by him in Harlem, N.Y. A disturbance was observed in the rear garden, and the large family cat was found making just

such attacks upon a garter-snake between two and three feet long. The snake was partly protected under a dense clump of rose bushes, and the cat had difficulty in seizing it, but kept springing at the neck, as in the other case. The gentleman at once interfered, and dispatched the reptile with a stick. But it would seem from these instances that snake hunting is a habit with some cats. Is it so with many? Perhaps some readers of *Science* can help us to judge how far it is familiar.

D. S. MARTIN.

The American Box Tortoise.

PERMIT me to call the attention of those interested in zoölogy to the North American box tortoise or *Terrapene* (*Cistudo*). In working over the material so far collected we notice no mention of material from Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, the Dakotas, New Mexico or western Texas. Neither are specimens reported from Mexico excepting Mexico City. Specimens are vaguely reported to have been found in Canada, but no specimens seem to be preserved and no authentic records are known. It is commonly supposed that the *Terrapene* (*Cistudo*) does not exist west of the Rockies. If any person has evidence to the contrary we would like to know it. We would request all who can give us aid on any of these points to write us. If possible we would like to receive specimens from any locality whatever. The comparatively fixed habitation of this genus renders a large collection including many localities highly desirable. Persons who may have any of these specimens on hand, but do not care to part with them, would confer a great favor by lending them. Favors rendered in this way would be fully appreciated and remembered. All packages or communications should be addressed to undersigned, Walker Museum, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

W. E. TAYLOR.

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LIVING near the famous "Serpent Mound," Adams County, Ohio. I have had opportunity to make a collection of pre-historic relics. I will sell same to any one interested in archaeology. Write me. Warren Cowen, Elmville, Highland County, Ohio.

TO EXCHANGE.—Herbarium specimens. Address, H. P. Chandler, Beaver Dam, Wisc.

KARYOKINETIC FIGURES IN MAMMALIAN TISSUES.—Since the publication of my Preliminary Notice in *Science* for Dec. 1, 1893, many parties have written me asking for permanent preparations showing mitosis. To these parties I have sent slides, and I now offer to all who desire them slides showing mitotic figures in nuclei of embryo kitten. A good immersion objective is necessary to make out the figures satisfactorily. Send 60 cents in stamps. If the slide is not satisfactory, return it, and I will return the money. I do not care to exchange slides. Frank S. Aby, State University, Iowa City, Iowa.

FOR SALE.—A small collection of bird skins, consisting of 135 specimens of New England species, most of which are in good condition and all have full data. Nearly all were collected in the Connecticut valley in Massachusetts. Price, \$10. Address, H. L. Clark, 3922 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Penna.

FOR SALE.—Price \$130, cost originally between \$300 and \$400, a microscope and following accessories: Acme (No. 2), stand and case lost, \$75; Crouch, one-fifth collar adjustment and objective, \$25; Tolles, four-tenths ditto, \$45; Tolles amplifier, \$25; Baush and Lomb, half solid eye piece, \$8; Laush and Lamb, acromatic condenser, \$18; Hartnack Polarizer, \$30; turn-table, \$6; Hartnack, camera lucida, \$20. D. T. Marshall, Metuchen, N. J.

TO EXCHANGE.—Works on entomology, botany and palaeontology for works on Indians and archaeology. H. Justin Roddy, Millersville, Pa.

FOR SALE. A Zertmayer new model U. S. Army Hospital monocular stand, cost \$110. H. C. Wells, 151 Broadway, New York.

WANTS.

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DOUBLE honor graduate in Science and Philosophy desires any suitable work in science, of the nature of teaching preferred. Address, E. A. Beckett, Trinity College, Toronto, Ontario.

WANTED.—Theory of the Earth, by Hutton. Principles of Geology, by Lyell. Manual of Geology, by Phillips. Lehrbuch der Geologie und Petrofacienkunde, by Carl Vogt. Etudes sur le Métamorphisme, by Daurée.

WANTED.—Second-hand books on osteology, embryology, and comparative anatomy. Send list, stating condition and cash price. Can offer a few good sets of birds' eggs if desired. R. C. McGregor, Palo Alto, California.

WANTED.—A copy of Chapman's Flora of the Southern United States. I have on hand for sale or exchange sets of the lichens of this vicinity. List furnished on application. Address, C. F. Maxwell, Box 127, Dublin, Tex.

WANTED.—Addresses of persons interested in archaeology. Copies of the new archaeologic journal in exchange for lists of collectors. A collection of 10,000 valuable objects, the results of my nine years' exploration in the Mississippi Valley, for sale. Price, \$7,650. Warren K. Moorehead, Waterloo, Indiana.

WANTED.—Vol. Birds of the Standard or Riverside Nat. Hist. Preferred in parts. F. A. Lucas, U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.

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