

The original, says the author, was subsequently taken to Spain and deposited in the library of the Duchess of Aveyro. M. Pinart adds that, from correspondence with the representatives of that family; he has reason to believe this original is still in existence.

Whether the 'writing' was the familiar pictography of the North American Indian, or allied to that higher form which prevailed in Mexico and Yucatan, may be decided by a sight of the document itself. At any rate, it is worth mentioning that this unknown people had a recognized system of recording ideas; and possibly investigations in the mounds of that locality may bring other specimens to light.

D. G. BRINTON.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

THE EARLIEST GENERIC NAME OF AN AMERICAN DEER.

IN September, 1817, Rafinesque published descriptions of two species of deer from Paraguay, which he named *Mazama bira* and *M. pita*.* The first was based on the *Gouazoubira*, the second on the *Gouazoupita*, of Azara. Both had been previously described by Illiger†; consequently the specific names fall. *Mazama bira* Raf. = *Cervus rufus* Ill.; *M. pita* Raf. = *C. simplicicornis* Ill. But the generic name *Mazama* antedates by many years the names *Subulo*‡, *Passalites*§, *Coassus*||, and even *Cariacus*¶, and hence is the earliest generic name for any American deer, so far as known. Fortunately, the rules

*Am. Monthly Mag., Vol. I., No. 5, Sept. 1817, p. 363.

†Abhandl. K. Preuss. Akad. Wiss., Berlin (for 1811), 1815, p. 117.

‡*Subulo* H. Smith, Griffith's Cuvier, Vol. V., 1827, p. 318.

§*Passalites* Gloger, Hand- u. Hilfsbuch Naturgeschichte, 1, 1841, p. 140.

||*Coassus* J. E. Gray, List. Mamm. British. Mus., 1843, pp. xxvii and 174.

¶*Cariacus* Lesson, Nouv. Tableau Regne Animal, Mammif., 1842, p. 173.

of nomenclature demand that the type be chosen from the species originally covered by the genus; it cannot be taken from those subsequently added by Rafinesque himself (in Am. Monthly Mag., Vol. I., p. 437, Oct. 1817; and Vol. II., p. 44, Nov. 1817). The type therefore must be one or the other of the two well known South American deer, *rufus* or *simplicicornis*, and may be restricted to the form, which will stand as *Mazama rufa* (Illiger).

C. HART MERRIAM.

JAMES OWEN DORSEY.

REV. J. OWEN DORSEY, Indian linguist, died in Washington, February 4, of typhoid fever. For over twenty years Mr. Dorsey was an enthusiastic student of aboriginal languages, chiefly those of the Siouan family. His acquaintance with these languages was so extended and his grasp of principles so strong as to render him one of the foremost authorities on Indian linguistics. Although numerous publications have been made under his name, the greater part of the material collected and created during his active career remains unpublished. Fortunately, this rich store of manuscripts is preserved, under the systematic arrangement of their author, in the Bureau of American Ethnology, with which Mr. Dorsey has been connected from its organization.

James Owen Dorsey was born in Baltimore, Maryland, October 31, 1848, and received his earlier education in local schools. He was remarkably precocious, reading Hebrew at the age of ten, and his vocal range and power of discriminating and imitating vocal sounds were exceptional. He entered the Theological Seminary of Virginia in 1867, was ordained a deacon of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1871, and during the same year became missionary among the Poncha Indians, in what was then Dakota Territory. There he began systematic study of Indian language, myth and custom.