

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.

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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.

Among his publications are memoirs on 'Omaha Sociology,' 'Osage Traditions,' 'a study of Siouan cults,' 'Omaha dwellings, furniture and implements,' printed in the annual reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology; 'Omaha and Ponca letters,' a bulletin of the same bureau; and the 'Dhegiha language,' forming Volume VI. of the Contributions to North American Ethnology. In addition he edited a Dakota-English dictionary, and a volume on Dakota grammar, texts and ethnography, by the late Rev. S. R. Riggs, published in two volumes of the last named series. Numerous minor articles were published in different anthropologic journals. Mr. Dorsey was Vice-President of Section H of the A. A. A. S. in 1893, and at the time of his death was Vice-President of the American Folklore Society. In the absence of the President of this Society he presided over the annual meeting in Washington during the Christmas holidays, this being his last public work in science.

W J M

DISCUSSION.

ON INDISCRIMINATE 'TAKING.'

IN many of the text-books which have of late appeared, and even in articles by some of the most renowned chemists, the verb 'to take' is frequently used in a way that is very annoying to teachers who are endeavoring to train students in brevity and exactness of expression. Pages could be filled with examples of bad style and verbosity that ill-accord with the clearness and brevity that are desirable, and that are supposed to characterize scientific literature. A few quotations from recent text-books will suffice to illustrate this particular case—that of indiscriminate 'taking.'

"Take a cylindrical porous jar, such as is used in a galvanic battery, close the open end, etc."

It were better to say, "close the end of a cylindrical porous jar, such as is used, etc."

Another example: "Take two flasks and connect them."

Better—"Connect two flasks," etc.

Another: "The method of experimenting adopted by Graham was to take a bottle or jar with a neck contracted somewhat and fill it to within half an inch of the top with the solution of the salt to be investigated."

Better—"The method . . . was to fill a bottle or jar with a somewhat contracted neck to within half an inch," etc.

Another: "If we take an iron tube closed at one end and connected at the other with a Sprengel pump and exhaust it completely."

This awkward form of diction often excites mirth in the class-room, as it gives unusual opportunities for double meanings.

"Take a pound of sugar and an equal weight of sulfuric acid." This would be a severe dose, even for a trained scientist.

The following is from a recent text-book: "Take a lump of chalk or sandstone, some very dry sand, a glass of water and a glass of treacle."

This might do for a bill of fare in a Chinese restaurant, but it is out of place in a scientific book.

"Take some white arsenic."—"Take a sedlitz powder,"—are the singular directions which preface two experiments in a book recently published by the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge in London.

If editors and teachers will pay more attention to this awkward use of the word 'take' they will incur the gratitude of a patiently suffering public.

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SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

The Life of Richard Owen. By his grandson, the REV. RICHARD OWEN, M. A. With the scientific portions revised by C. DAVIES SHERBORN. Also an essay on Owen's position in anatomical science.