

## ZOOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PUBLICATION.\*

THE report presented in 1896 stated that this Committee was issuing two circulars: (I.) Questions concerning general principles of Bibliography and Publication, sent to experts and leading zoologists; (II.) Suggestions concerning various cognate matters 'wholly within the control of editors and publishing committees,' sent to the editors of all publications connected with zoology.

Circular I. has been sent to 115 zoologists, the majority of whom have had practical experience in bibliography. From 36 of these, in various parts of the world, replies have been received, containing, in many cases, a detailed discussion and practical suggestions of much value. A digest of these replies is being drawn up, and the Committee hopes to furnish a definite report thereon next year. Meanwhile certain of the suggestions and criticisms received have greatly helped the Committee in its consideration of the replies to Circular II.

To this latter circular and its strictly practical proposals the Committee thinks it advisable to confine attention for the present. Circular II. has been sent to the editors of nearly all the publications listed in the *Zoological Record*, viz., to some 800, the exceptions being those whose addresses could not be ascertained; it has also been sent to the editors of various publications not hitherto included in the *Zoological Record* list, e. g., all zoological publications recently started.

Replies were not specially solicited, but comments have been received from 39 editors or publishing bodies, to all of whom the Committee desires to express its thanks. Among them may be mentioned: the R. Physical Society of Edinburgh, the Natural

\*Second report of the committee consisting of Sir W. H. Flower, chairman; Professor W. A. Herdman, Mr. W. E. Hoyle, Dr. P. L. Sclater, Mr. Adam Sedgwick, Dr. D. Sharp, Mr. C. D. Sherborn, Rev. T. R. Stebbing, Professor W. F. R. Weldon and Mr. F. A. Bather, secretary.

History Society of Glasgow, the Cambridge Philosophical Society, the Entomological Society of London, the Liverpool Biological Society; *Nature*, *Natural Science*, *The Zoologist*, *The Entomologist*, *The Journal of Malacology*, *Journal of Physiology*, Cambridge; The R. Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch; K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin; K. Zool. u. Anthropol.-Ethnogr. Museum zu Dresden; Zoological Station in Naples; R. Soc. Scientiarum Bohemica; Physikalisch-ökonomische Gesellschaft zu Königsberg; R. Soc. Sciences in Upsala; Société Impériale des Naturalistes de Moscou; Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam; Geological Society of America, Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Essex Institute, Cincinnati Society of Natural History, Natural History Society of New Brunswick, *SCIENCE*, *Bulletin of American Palæontology*, *Entomological News*. All these replies are favorable to the suggestions of the Committee in the main, and some even ask for further advice. Exception has, however, been taken by some to suggestions 1, 3 and 7; while comments have also been made on suggestions 2, 4 and 5. It is proposed to deal with these in order.

First, the Committee wishes to state clearly that it has no wish, even if it had the authority, to lay down laws for zoologists or for publishing bodies and editors. It is, however, plain that many are grateful for some guidance, and the Committee hopes that it may serve as a medium for conveying to those who need it the general opinion of the experienced. They are also difficulties which, though they appear to some insuperable, may possibly be surmounted in ways that have been communicated to the Committee.

(1) "That each part of a serial publication should have the date of actual publication, as near as may be, printed on the wrapper, and, when possible, on the last sheet sent to press."

Five correspondents do not see the use of this, thinking that the date on the wrapper is enough, and that in the case of annual publications the date of the year suffices. The Committee would point out that wrappers are constantly lost in binding, and that periodicals are often broken up by specialists or second-hand booksellers, the consequent loss of date causing much trouble to workers of a later day. To avoid this, the Cincinnati Society of Natural History would add the date at the head of each paper, while *Natural Science* prints the month and year across every page-opening. Some societies, *e. g.*, the Philadelphia Academy, issue a certificate of dates at the end of the volume. The Liverpool Biological Society 'put at the head of each paper the date when it is read, and are willing to add the date when it is printed off;' neither of these dates are necessary, and they may be misleading. In most cases the actual day of publication is immaterial, especially in cases where no new species are described, but at least the month should always be given, and the Committee does not see that there need be any difficulty in doing this. If some unforeseen delay does occur, the date can always be rectified with a date-stamp.

(2) "That authors' separate copies should be issued with the original pagination and plate-numbers clearly indicated on each page and plate, and with a reference to the original place of publication."

The Committee believes this to be a most important recommendation, and its view is supported by all the zoologists consulted. Nevertheless, many leading publications continue to issue authors' copies repaged, and often without reference to volume-number, date, or even the name of the periodical. The remedy is so simple that the Committee urgently appeals for its universal application.

(3) "That authors' separate copies should not be distributed privately before the paper

has been published in the regular manner."

It is a curious fact that on this question editors take a different line to working zoologists. All the latter who have discussed the matter agree with the Committee as to the extreme inconvenience caused by the general custom. Among the editors, however, nine (*i. e.*, nearly one-quarter) protest against the present recommendation. The objectors represent small societies which publish at lengthy intervals, and their reasons are: that it is not fair to an author to prevent him from receiving his separate copies for perhaps a year; that it is not to the advantage of science that work should thus be delayed; that a society which did this would receive fewer contributions and lose its members. In brief, the argument is: "We are too poor to publish properly; therefore, we must allow authors to publish improperly." This form of argument suggests an easy remedy, and one that, on the informal suggestion of the Committee, has already been put into practice by the Liverpool Biological Society and by the R. Physical Society of Edinburgh. The remedy is this:

In cases where a volume or part can only appear at long intervals each author that requires separate copies of his paper for private distribution before its publication in the volume or part should be permitted them only on this condition—that, for every month before the probable issue of the volume, a certain number of copies—say five—should be placed by him in the hands of the society or its accredited publisher, in order that they may be offered for sale to the public at a fixed price. Further, that the society, for its part, should announce the publication, with price and agent, of their papers to some recognized office, or to some such paper as the *Zoologischer Anzeiger*. The details of expense must be settled between the author and the society.

(4) "That it is desirable to express the subject of one's paper in its title, while keeping the title as concise as possible."

It is satisfactory to find no objections raised to this recommendation, since there is no doubt that there is room for much improvement in this direction. Such phrases as 'Further contributions towards our knowledge of the \* \* \* \*,' or 'Einige Beobachtungen über \* \* \* \*,' or 'Essai d'une monographie du genre \* \* \* \*' might well be dispensed with as superfluous. The ornithologist who, in 1895, published a book with a title of ninety-one words would seem to have forgotten the functions of a preface.

On the other hand, it is pointed out that certain periodicals, such as the *Bulletin de la Société Entomologique de France* and the *Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde zu Berlin*, publish communications without any title, to the constant confusion of naturalists. The Committee begs to urge the reform of this practice, in which it can see no advantage.

(5) "That new species should be properly diagnosed, and figured when possible."

The only comment on this is the proposed omission of the words 'when possible.' With this the Committee sympathizes, but wishes to avoid all appearance of laying down a law that would constantly be broken.

(6) "That new names should not be proposed in irrelevant footnotes or anonymous paragraphs."

Naturally nobody supports such actions as are here objected to, but since some have doubted the possibility of the latter, it is as well to state that the suggestion was based on an actual case occurring in the Report of a well-known International Congress. The proposal of a new name, without diagnosis, in a footnote to a student's textbook, or in a short review of a work by another author, is by no means a rare occurrence. The Committee believes that

such practices are calculated to throw nomenclature into confusion rather than to advance science.

(7) "That references to previous publications should be made fully and correctly if possible, in accordance with one of the recognized sets of rules for quotation, such as that recently adopted by the French Zoological Society."

Dr. Paul Mayer, of Naples, writes: "Most authors are extremely idle in making good lists of literature themselves, and even opposed my correcting them according to our rules. There ought to be some training in this at our universities." This is confirmed by one or two other editors, but not all have the energy of Dr. Mayer. Some, indeed, oppose the word 'fully' on the ground that it leads to waste of time and space. The Committee would explain that the reference to a particular set of rules was intended merely as a guide to those who have not had the training that Dr. Mayer would like to see; they would also point out, in the words of the editor of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, that 'what may be intelligible to the specialist is very puzzling to the general student.' Nowadays, when so many zoologists work with the aid of authors' separate copies, it is an enormous convenience to them to have the title of the paper at least indicated, and not merely the volume, date and pagination given. The Committee, therefore, cannot agree that this suggestion involves a waste of time.

#### ASTRONOMICAL NOTES.

##### SECTION A AT THE BOSTON MEETING, A. A. A. S.

It might be thought that the meetings of the Astronomical Conference and of the Mathematical Society, which preceded that of the American Association and were prolonged so as to interfere somewhat with it, would have detracted from the interest in Section A. While this may have been true in part, it did not reduce the number of the