

Secretary Island, Thompson Sound. Then followed an interval of twenty-seven years without any reliable record of *Notornis*, and it seemed not improbable that the species had at last become extinct, when a third was captured by a rabbit hunter, or rather by his dog, on the eastern side of Lake Te Anau. This specimen was offered in the United States for \$600, and was finally sold at Stevens's famous auction rooms, London, for £110.

The exact locality where the fourth and last bird was found is not given, but it is pretty certain that the species ranges over a considerable extent of wild country and, although probably what may be termed a 'decadent' species, will persist for a while longer.

It is to be hoped that the last specimen has fallen into the hands of some one who will preserve both skin and skeleton, for there is no reason why so large a bird should not be both mounted and skeletonized. The habit of 'keeping the skin and throwing away the characters' of a bird is, however, only too prevalent, and when this is done by professional collectors we can not expect much from others. And this leads to the remark that, when the party dispatched to the Galapagos Islands by Hon. Walter Rothschild obtained four specimens of the flightless and all but extinct cormorant they simply took the skins and failed to preserve a single bone. Considering that the problems of the place of origin and lines of dispersion of the cormorants hinge upon anatomical evidence, such neglect is little less than culpable.

ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE.

IN *The Auk* for October, Mr. D. G. Elliott attacks and Dr. J. A. Allen defends, successfully it seems to us, Canon XL of the Code of the American Ornithologists' Union. This canon states that "the permanence of a name is of far more importance than

its signification or structure.* * * It therefore follows that hybrid names [anagrams, 'nonsense' names and 'barbarous' or 'exotic' names] cannot be displaced.* * *

Why any working zoologist, including under this term paleontologists, should wish to abolish this canon it is difficult to understand, for its removal, or lack of adoption, would open, or does open, the way to countless changes of nomenclature and the creation of hundreds, if not thousands, of new names. And all for no good reason; zoological names are not literature, but simply handles by which species may be grasped, and they serve their purpose equally well if rough hewn or grammatically polished. Le Conte used *Gyascutus* as a generic name simply to illustrate the point that a name need not of necessity have any meaning, and Dr. Leidy coined names with the express statement that they were not etymologically correct, but used because they were shorter than if correctly formed. While it is well when proposing a new name to have it properly formed, there is no reason why long-existing names should be overthrown simply because of some fault in their construction. Possibly most of the readers of SCIENCE are familiar with Professor Walter Miller's paper on 'Scientific Names of Latin and Greek Construction,' published in the Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences, but the paper deserves to have a wide circulation. F. A. L.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

ANTIQUITIES OF COSTA RICA.

THE last report (March, 1898) of Señor Juan F. Ferraz, Director of the National Museum of Costa Rica, presents in succinct form the condition of the institution, its aims, its regulations and its needs. It is earnestly to be hoped that to the latter there will be a liberal response, as the Museum has done excellent work and is a credit to the State of Costa Rica.

Archæology is a branch which the Museum has always cultivated, and it made an honorable display at Madrid and Chicago. In the present report there is appended a lithograph of a remarkable monolithic inscription on the right bank of the Rio Colorado, province of Guanacaste. It displays two well-known conventional signs for 'man' surmounted by what seems to be the drawing of a tomahawk, and above this an elaborate figure, apparently of a house or other building. A photograph and exact measurements would be most desirable and are necessary for a proper study of the monument.

THE BORGHIAN CODEX.

THIS valuable relic of ancient Mexican literature, deriving its name from Cardinal Borgia and preserved in the library of the Vatican, has been recently reproduced in fac-simile by the munificence of the Duc de Loubat. The copies are limited in number and most of them have been presented to institutions. The one I have seen is in the library of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Codex makes a book $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches square, folded in the usual Mexican manner (like a screen), of 74 pages, and is apparently complete. Its contents appear to be the arrangement of the *tonalamatl*, in various sequences, for divining purposes. The grotesque collections of objects indicate the phonetic element of the picture writing, according to the 'ikonomatic' system.

The reproduction is most carefully executed and offers the student all the advantages of the original document.

A NEWLY-PUBLISHED AZTEC DOCUMENT.

DR. ANTONIO PEÑAFIEL, already well known for his publications on Mexican archæology, has begun the issue of a 'Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia Mexicana,' with a reproduction, in colors, of the 'Mexican Manuscript, No. 4,' of the

Royal Library of Berlin. It dates from after the Conquest, about 1539, with a text in Nahuatl and Spanish. The colored figures represent the names of places and of persons exhibited by that method of phonetic writing for which I have proposed the term 'ikonomatic' (see my 'Essays of an Americanist,' pp. 213-229). Dr. Peñafiel is not always successful in the analysis of these complex figures. Thus (p. 33) *Tepecoman* was not understood by the native artist as *tepetl*, town, and *comalli*, dish (as Dr. P. says, p. 73), but as *tepetl*, mountain; *co*, in; *maill*, hand; so he drew the picture to represent a hand in, and coming out of, a mountain.

The publication is of much interest to archæologists, and it is earnestly to be hoped that the erudite editor will continue the series.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE NATURALISTS AND AFFILIATED SOCIETIES.

THE program of the American Society of Naturalists to be held in New York on Wednesday and Thursday, December 28th and 29th, is as follows:

December 28th, at the American Museum of Natural History, at 8 p. m. Address of welcome by the President of the Museum, Morris K. Jesup, followed by a lecture on 'Collections of Fossil Mammals and their Care,' by Professor Henry F. Osborn. At 9:30 a reception to the Naturalists and Affiliated Societies, given by Professor Osborn at his house, No. 850 Madison avenue.

December 29th, at Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University, 12:30-3 p. m., provision will be made for those members who wish to lunch at the University (West Hall). 2 p. m., business meeting of the Naturalists. At 3 the annual discussion on 'Advances in Methods of University Teaching,' by representatives of seven societies, the Anatomists, Anthropologists, Geologists, Botanical Morphologists, Animal Morphologists, Physiologists and Psychologists. At 6:30 an informal session of the Naturalists will be held, pending the annual dinner at 7.

On Friday, December 30th, an opportunity will be given for the members to visit the