

II., p. 37, Dr. W. B. Scott established the genus *Mesocyon*, basing it on the same species *coryphæus*. Dr. Scott seems to have afterwards forgotten his genus, since he employed Eyerman's name. Indeed, all paleontologists who have had occasion to mention the genus have called it *Hypotemnodon*. It is obvious, however, that it must yield to *Mesocyon*.

IN 1865, in *Proceed. Acad. Nat. Sciences of Philadelphia*, p. 90, Dr. Leidy described, from the Eocene of South Dakota, a carnivore which he called *Amphicyon gracilis*. Unfortunately for his species, Pomel had, as early as 1847, employed the same name for a fossil carnivore found in Europe. Cope in 1884, in his *Vertebrata of the Tertiary Formations of the West*, p. 916, made Leidy's name a synonym of *Galecyneus gregarius*. Scott and Osborn in 1887, in a paper in the *Bulletin of the Museum Comp. Zoology*, Harvard, Vol. XIII., p. 152, speak of it as a distinct species under the name *Cynodictis gracilis*. Matthew recently, in *Bulletin of the American Museum*, Vol. XII., p. 54, records it as an 'invalid species' and apparently as a synonym of *Cynodictis lippincottianus*. When those disagree who have access to the type specimens and to abundant materials belonging to related forms, it is evident that the last word has not been said. Until it can be determined with some degree of unanimity where Leidy's specimens belong, it will be better to keep them to themselves under a distinct name. Furthermore, the possibility exists that the discovery of additional materials will prove Leidy's form to be a good species. Pending this settlement of the question I propose to call the *Amphicyon gracilis* of Leidy *Cynodictis hylactor*. The specific name is that of one of Actæon's dogs.

O. P. HAY.

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM, July 27, 1899.

THE PROPER NAME OF THE POLAR BEAR.

THE technical name of the Polar Bear as usually mentioned is *Thalarctos maritimus* (Linn.), the reference being *Systema Naturæ*, X., 1758, p. 47. In looking up this reference I find it is simply mentioned under *Ursus arctos*, as follows: '*Ursus maritimus albus major arcticus*'; with a reference to Martën's

Spitzbergen, and concluding with a note doubting the specific distinctness of this bear. A question as to the value of this reference was referred to several noted authorities on the Mammalia, whose answer did not sustain the reference, and induced me to examine the case closer. The next date when any mention of the Polar Bear was made was 1776, when Müller and Pallas each gave it a name. Müller in his *Zoologiæ Danicæ Prodromus*, etc., p. 3, refers to it as a variety of *U. arctos*, calling it *U. albus*, but giving only a reference to Martën's Spitzbergen, and a short note on its habitat. Pallas, in his *Reise*, III., bh. 2, p. 691, describes this species as *U. marinus*, with a good diagnosis, which proves he knew the animal very well. As the name of Pallas is undoubtedly the best, being accompanied by a good description, therefore the name of the Polar Bear should be *Thalarctos marinus* (Pallas). The reference is *Reise*, III., bh. 2, p. 691, 1776.

JAMES A. G. REHN.

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES,
PHILADELPHIA, August 7, 1899.

THE INTERNATIONAL CATALOGUE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: A few days after contributing to your esteemed journal my remarks upon the bibliographical methods proposed for the Catalogue of Scientific Papers I received a report of a committee of Dutch scientists, whose conclusions are diametrically opposed in certain points to the opinions which I expressed. Impartiality requires that I should not pass this criticism unnoticed.

Let me translate from the French text: "The adoption of the Dewey Decimal Classification having been favored by certain persons, we wish to state our opinion in regard to this system. This opinion is very unfavorable. In our opinion the adoption of the system would lead to the failure of the enterprise.

"Our conviction in this matter is based upon the faulty manner in which the system has been worked out for various sciences in the 'Decimal Classification and Relative Index' of Mr. Dewey (1894, Library Bureau, 146 Franklin Street, Boston; 21 Bloomsbury Street, London).