

something of a collector without being an ophiologist of experience. The high probability that some of his snakes had become mixed has prevented a public record of this alleged locality, in the absence of further evidence.

The collector of living specimens needs especially to guard against being misled by errors of this class, for the reason that living animals are not usually labeled when collected, beyond the possibility of confusion.

A few such cases taken at random from memory in the experience of the Zoological Society are the receipt of a South American heron, said to have been captured near Portland, Oregon; a tayra from west Africa; a bald eagle from Brazil; a southern fox squirrel from Java; a North African species of hedgehog from Manila; and a coyote captured in Porto Rico by soldiers of a volunteer regiment which served in that campaign.

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#### SHORTER ARTICLES.

##### PRELIMINARY NOTE ON A NEW ORGANISM PRODUCING ROT IN CAULIFLOWER AND ALLIED PLANTS.

DURING August and September of 1901 my attention was drawn to a disease of cauliflowers in the vicinity of Guelph, Ontario. The plants, which were well grown and cared for, showed symptoms of rot, the interior of the stem, and often all the flowering or edible part being changed into a dark-colored soft mass. Examination of this rotted material revealed the presence of enormous numbers of bacteria. Subsequently, the causal organism was isolated in pure culture, and its pathogenicity and relation to the rot were established by inoculation of healthy cauliflower plants, the production of rot in these plants, and the reisolation of the germ, and its cultivation on various media.

The organism is a medium-sized motile bacillus, with peritrichous flagellæ, five to nine in number, stains slowly with methylene blue (Loeffler), better with carbol-fuchsin. Grows best under aerobic conditions, but is able to grow slightly in atmosphere of hydrogen. Liquefies gelatin; grows on surface agar as a

moist, whitish, slightly opalescent growth, which becomes more massive with age; curdles milk slowly, producing slight digestion, with acid reaction (litmus). Produces heavy cloudiness in bouillon. Changes the red color of rosolic acid peptone bouillon to a light brown. On slices of raw potato, produces a deep creamy growth; the potato is completely softened, with the production of a considerable amount of ammonia. Grows well on raw slices of the following vegetables, producing softening or rotting: cauliflower, cabbage, turnip, rape, radish, horseradish, kale, celery, artichoke, asparagus, carrot, onion, tomato and parsnip. It does not grow on raw beet, and on sugar beet but very sparingly.

The growth on some of the above vegetables, notably cabbage, horseradish and onion, is frequently accompanied with the production of gas bubbles, and disagreeable, offensive odors.

The organism grows best at 25–30° C., but grows well at both 20° and 37° C.

The action of the bacillus on the plant is similar to the *Pseudomonas* described by Potter. It dissolves the middle lamella; the enzyme produced by the bacillus may be isolated from the rotted cauliflower or from bouillon.

The name proposed for the organism is *Bacillus oleraceæ*.

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#### RECENT MUSEUM REPORTS.

THE annual reports of three of our great museums have appeared within the last few months and may well be considered together. These, in their order of appearance, are the Field Columbian Museum at Chicago, the American Museum of Natural History of New York City, and the United States National Museum at Washington. This last is so far behind the others in date, being for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1900, that it is a little difficult to make exact comparison with them. Each of these institutions expresses a need for more money for current expenses and the National Museum makes its regular annual plea for more room. How necessary more