

mastered the imitation of the notes and calls of a large number of birds of many species, both wild and domesticated ones, that it was truly wonderful to witness some of his achievements along such lines. When a flock of crows was flying far overhead, I have seen him call them all down, alighting all about him, all giving vent to those notes they are accustomed to give when one of their kind is in trouble and cawing for help. It was remarkable to note the effect his marvelous imitations in this way produced on many kinds of birds in domestication as well as those in nature.

R. W. SHUFELDT

FRANZ STEINDACHNER

FRANZ STEINDACHNER, for many years intendant or chief director of the Hofmuseum at Vienna, died on December 10, 1919, at the advanced age of 85. His death was due directly to the inability of the Austrian Museum to secure coal to warm any of its offices.

Steindachner, a student and friend of Agassiz, spent some time at Harvard, about 1870, later collecting fishes in California and Brazil. His first systematic paper on the fossil fishes of Austria was published in 1859. From that time until 1914 when the war wrecked his nation, his memoirs on fishes, living and fossil, some 440 in all, appeared with great regularity. These were always carefully prepared and finely illustrated by the stone engravings of his most excellent artist, Edward Konopicky.

His last series of papers in quarto dealing with certain fishes of Brazil passed into the hands of the British censor, an obstacle from which but one copy has yet come across.

Steindachner conferred his attention to faunal work, especially to exact definition of genera and species. The larger combinations he left to less experienced investigators on the principle laid down by Linnæus. "*Tyro novit classes; magister fit species.*" Within the field as thus limited, no German systematist in vertebrate zoology has stood in the class with him.

When the Imperial government razed the fortifications of old Vienna, the property on the street thus opened, the "Burgring," was sold and with the proceeds three imperial public buildings were erected, the Opera House, Library and the Museum of Natural History. The last was long since placed in Steindachner's charge, but with a wholly inadequate force, and with little provision for extension. In the fishes, Steindachner had the services of an artist and a preparator, but had to do all the identification and labelling himself, and to pay from his own means for all specimens he felt it necessary to buy.

In his devotion to his work, he never married and when I visited him in 1910 he occupied humble lodgings in a stone annex to the museum, cared for only by an elderly housekeeper. To the general public he was known as a "*Bekannter Fischkenner.*" To his colleagues he was one of the most trustworthy and most devoted lovers of knowledge for its own sake. Among the tragedies of the great war nothing is more disheartening than its smothering effect on European science, one feature of which has been the death of this great master in faunal zoology.

DAVID STARR JORDAN

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

SIGMA XI AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE society of the Sigma Xi of the university will hold its next meeting in the medical laboratory on Wednesday evening, January 19. The subject for discussion will be "Wheat; a Study in the World's Food Supply." Dr. Alonzo E. Taylor, professor of physiological chemistry, will open the discussion. Dr. Taylor was one of the advisers of the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the war and who made several food surveys in Europe for the State Department. After he has made a survey of the subject the discussion will be continued by Dr. Clyde L. King, of the Wharton School faculty, who will speak on the situation in the United States. Dr. Ernest M. Patterson, also of the Wharton