

was fishing one day on a stream that ran into the Rio Grande, and was searching for bait under some logs and other floatwood on its banks. He was looking for a frog and by chance came across this reptile. It endeavored to burrow, or thrust itself into the soft earth, to which it was so similar in color that he thought at first it was a twig or rootlet that he had moved, but by its self-actions he saw it was a living animal and he picked it up. He had never seen anything like it before. It looked as if it had neither eyes, nor mouth, nor tail. In fact, he did not know which end was the head, and the idea at once struck him that it might be double headed, or a kind of scaly worm, but it was so curious that he put it in his pickle bottle.

In May of this year, 1883, two consignments of reptiles reached me from Bexar Co., Texas, forwarded by Gustave Toudouze, Esq., and in them were three specimens of the same remarkable reptile. At first I scarcely knew whether to accept the statements of Bell as fact or fiction, but when these similar specimens reached me from a most reliable source, and also from Southern Texas, all doubts as to his veracity of course vanished. Mr. Toudouze was written to and asked for the particulars of its capture, and he replied as follows: "In regard to the little animal it is unknown to persons in Texas. It is exceedingly rare, and lives in the low bottom lands on the borders of rivers, under leaves and old stumps and debris of wood. I find some analogy in it to *Anguis fragilis* or slowworm of Europe. I hope to send you others, as well as a living one, and to keep one at home myself in order that I may study it as it should be." This was perfectly satisfactory, and although the exact date of capture was not given it can be stated with certainty as in the latter

part of April or first week in May, on the banks of the Medina River, some eighteen miles from San Antonio, in Bexar Co., Texas. On first seeing it I considered I had re-discovered the *Ophtholmion Longissimum*, or a species or a variety of it. I sent two specimens to the Smithsonian Institution as such, and was requested to allow it to remain as it had heretofore been considered a myth. Now hereby hangs the tail. After no small trouble I had sent a long paper to be published in the *American Naturalist*, with exactly two such photographs as you have before you. Now, the editor of that magazine is Mr. Cope, one of our best herpetologists. He was struck with the great resemblance between these photographs and the *Rena Dulcis*, or as it is now termed by some means "*Stenostoma Dulce*." He wrote me on the subject, and stated that on this account he had requested Mr. Baird to forward him one of my specimens for examination, and he considers it is the latter and not *Ophtholmion Longissimum*. To satisfy myself I have written to France on the subject, to one of the first herpetologists living, and as soon as I get his reply I shall lay it before you.

But to proceed, in regard to its history and the family to which it belongs. Both *Rena Dulcis* and *Ophtholmion* belong to the family *Typhlops* or the *Typhlopsidæ*. They are all burrowing reptiles, and seek their subsistence in the soft earth in damp places. Some prey on small worms, the smaller insects, mollusks and their eggs, or on the decaying animal and vegetable matter so abundant in the sub-tropical regions of Texas, and the Gulf States and in the tropics. The genus *Typhlops* is also common in many parts of the East Indies.

The *Typhlopsidæ* have a flat head, or more properly depressed, broad,