

siderable attention, but whilst in many respects the descriptions of that great observer in connection with animals in general would be worthy of a modern zoologist, the nonsense he wrote in endeavouring to solve the intricacies as to the propagation of the eel is hardly worthy of notice ; yet his opinion swayed the minds of naturalists for ages.

As late as 1880, or twenty-six years ago, Jacoby wrote as follows in treating of the eel :—

To a person not acquainted with the circumstances of the case it must seem astonishing, and it is certainly somewhat humiliating to men of science, that a fish which is commoner in many parts of the world than any other fish, the herring perhaps excepted, which is daily seen in the market and on the table, has been able, in spite of the powerful aid of modern science, to shroud the manner of its propagation, its birth, and its death in darkness, which even to the present day has not been completely dispelled.*

Since then more light has come to the students of fishes as to its propagation, and experts have sought to solve the problem, by approaching it along several paths.

More than two hundred years ago a group of ribbon-shaped fish-like creatures were discovered, all the known kinds of which are marine, and it has been proved, within the last two decades, that these are the larval forms, or what we may call the juvenile forms, of different species of eels.

The discovery of ripe eel eggs is due to the researches of Raffaele and Grassi, and dates no further back than 1888, or 18 years ago.

Since 1900, or six years ago, Carl H. Eigenmann, of Bloomington, Indiana, following in the paths opened out of these, and other investigators, has further pursued the subject, and in a pamphlet entitled : "The solution of the Eel question" sums up his conclusions as follows :—

We now know, (1) that eels, both male and female, migrate to the ocean during October to January ; (2) that these eels probably deposit the eggs that are found on the surface during the following August to January ; (3) that the eels do not ripen in shallow water, but the female, according to Grassi, at a depth of five hundred meters ; (4, that the eggs of the eels float, according to Grassi, at a great depth ; according to Raffaele and Eigenmann at the sur-

*Carl H. Eigenmann : 'The Solution of the Eel Question.' Re-printed from 'Transactions of the American Microscopical Society,' Aug., 1901, p. 5.