

siderable variation in composition, the average is 85 to 90 per cent water and 10 per cent solid matter. In *Morchella esculenta* it is 89.54 per cent water, 10.46 solid matter; in the cultivated mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*, 91.8 per cent water, 8.2 per cent solid matter. This would place them on a par with cabbages and turnips, which are not generally considered as being highly nutritious.

Large quantities of edible mushrooms go to waste every summer. This is to be regretted since they are easily accessible. While some mushrooms have

an indifferent taste, most are of fine flavor, and would repay the trouble taken in collecting them. If their value as a delicacy were more generally known, sufficient numbers could be found all through summer, at the cost of a little exertion, to furnish an appetizing relish for many a meal.

Thanks are due to the late Mr. J. M. Macoun, Botanist of the Victoria Memorial Museum, for the photographs from which the accompanying plate has been made and to Prof. John Dearness, London, Ont., for identification of specimens.

A FABLE OF TO-DAY.

BY RALF RANGER.

Once upon a time there was an Old Naturalist. He was quite a good Old Naturalist too, and if you look in many of the books you will find many observations and the results of interesting and important investigations credited to him, and not a few monographs bear his name as author.

After some further years of work this Old Naturalist was about to write a book dealing with a good many different forms of animal life. One day he went up to a big museum and introduced himself to Mr. Flittin Nomen, the young expert in charge of the ornithological section.

"Ah, yes, sir," said Mr. Flittin Nomen, "I am extremely glad to meet you. I have always admired your monograph on *Planesticus migratorius*."

"Pardon me, but I could not have been the author of the work you refer to. I do not even know the species of which you speak."

"Yes, yes, but I mean your monograph on the American Robin."

"Oh, the American Robin. But is not the name *Merula migratoria*?"

"It has not been called *Merula migratoria* for a long, long time, for four years at the very least," said Mr. Flittin Nomen. "Your account of the habits of *Dendroica fusca*, too, I have always held in very high esteem."

"*Dendroica fusca*? I thought that I knew the genus *Dendroica* pretty well, but I know of no such species."

"It used to be called *Dendroica blackburniae*, but not for a long time, not for the last three years certainly. And you know," said Mr. Flittin Nomen, his eyes brightening, "it is really not worth your while learning the name *fusca* for this species, for I have recently made a great discovery—I have found that the specific name *alba* really has priority. That is the name used in the work published a week before the publication of *fusca* and consequently—"

"But this species is not *white*" exclaimed the Old Naturalist.

"Oh, that doesn't matter a bit, *alba* has priority by a whole week—think of that! It took me a long time, and much very careful research, to make sure of the exact week of publication of the two works, but I have confirmed it, and am proud to say that I have thus been able to make a very valuable contribution to science. I know that in the old days it was supposed that a scientific name should be in some degree descriptive of the species, or at least should not be entirely misleading in its significance, but that idea is now entirely out of fashion. *Alba* is undoubtedly a lapsus calmi, but that doesn't matter either, it has priority, and *that's the thing*."

"But is there no such thing as a nomen conservenda, thus allowing a name which has become thoroughly established to remain?"

"I believe there used to be, in ancient times, but such absurd ideas are entirely out of date."

The Old Naturalist turned to go.

"So very glad to have met you," said Mr. Flittin Nomen, "and I can give you a bit of advance information. I believe that I can prove that *Melospiza* is untenable for the Song Sparrows, and it should be *Rubraspizella*. It's really a very good job too, for they have been *Melospiza* long enough."

"Truly, 'the letter of the law and not the spirit,'" murmured the Old Naturalist as he wandered off in the direction of the entomological section.

In the entomological section the Old Naturalist met the expert in charge, Dr. Changem Offen, and tried to converse with him, but as all the names the Old Naturalist used had to be dug up in a list of synonyms, there was little time left for discussion of life-histories, habits, habitats, economic status, and other points in which the Old Naturalist was interested, but which Dr. Changem Offen seemed to regard as of very secondary importance.