

The remarks of the author on synonymy, nomenclature and priority, seem to me to be most excellent and worthy of serious consideration. In an extended discussion of the merits of the descriptions of Diptera of the late Mr. Walker of the British Museum, he characterizes them as so extremely superficial—descriptive rather of the specimen than of the species, that in his opinion, they should be entitled to no claim for priority whenever they cannot be positively identified without an examination of the type specimen. Thus, of twenty-six species of *Dolichopus* described by him, not a single one could be recognized. The question suggests itself, to what extent might this rule be extended to descriptions in the other orders of insects by this author, and in general, to the writings of other authors.

In considering the number of Diptera, Osten Sacken believes, that rejecting those descriptions which will probably prove irre recognizable, the number of described Diptera of North America, north of Mexico, will hardly reach 2,500; that the undescribed material at present in collections, if worked up, would perhaps double the number; and that when the long neglected order shall have received the attention given to the Coleoptera, it will equal if not exceed the latter, numerically.

Reference at the present to studies in the Diptera, naturally suggests the great loss which Dipterology has sustained in the recent death—in April last—of the distinguished Prussian Dipterist, Dr. H. Loew, long known as one of the most eminent cultivators of this branch of Entomology. During the last twenty years he has been engaged in the study of North American Diptera, and at the request of the Smithsonian Institution he has prepared a series of monographs, three volumes of which (Parts i., ii. and iv.) have been published by that Institution. While his removal from his work at this stage of its progress, cannot but be deeply deplored, there is a consolation to be found in the knowledge that it is not to be wholly arrested, but that a worthy collaborator—Baron Osten Sacken—remains to conduct it to a completion, we hope, of the plan proposed.

The series of *Dimmock's Special Bibliographies*, now being published at Cambridge, Mass., will prove to be of eminent service to the student who desires to avail himself of the literature of our insects, so widely scattered through the various scientific and popular journals, government surveys, and other publications. Two numbers of the series have been issued—the first containing a complete list to date, it is believed, of the Entomological writings of Dr. John L. LeConte, and the second, those of Dr. George H. Horn. A third, of the writings of Mr. S. H. Scudder, is nearly completed. I regret that it has been thought necessary, in this series, to dispense wholly with the use of capitals in all scientific names, even in the family and ordinal divisions, and I believe that many of you will agree with me in claiming for the royalty of science exemption from conformity to an innovation based on mere convenience.

Prof. C. V. Riley and J. Monell have contributed to the *Bulletin of the U. S. Geolog.-Geograph. Survey* (vol. v., pp. 1-32) a paper entitled *Notes of the Aphididae of the United States, with Descriptions of Species Occurring West of the Mississippi*. Part I contains extended biological notes on the Pemphiginae, by Prof. Riley, and Part II., notes on Aphidinae with descriptions of new species, by Mr. Monell. The paper, illustrated by two plates, is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of these exceedingly interesting insects.

A special Report from the Department of Agriculture, entitled, *The Silk-worm, being a brief Manual of Instruction for the Production of Silk*, has been prepared by Prof. Riley, and largely distributed by the Department, to meet the demand from various portions of the United States for information upon the important industry of silk-culture. The Manual is quite full in the natural history of the Silk-worm, in the methods of culture, and directions for reeling the cocoons. There seems no reason why this industry, properly fostered, may not be made to add materially to the productive resources of our country.

Abstracts of the papers presented by Prof. Riley at the St. Louis meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, have been published in the Proceedings of the Society, and also in a separate pamphlet. Among these are *Notes on the Life-History of the Blister Beetles and on the Structure and Development of Hornia*; *on the Larval Characteristics of Corydalus and Chauliodes*, and *A New Source of Wealth to the United States [Sericulture]*.