

piece lying along the milky way from N.E. to S.W. about 20 degrees, the cross piece consisting of three stars at right angles to the other line and about 18 degrees in length. This cross represents The Swan, the upright piece being the body and beak and the cross-piece the wings. This constellation contains eighty-one stars, including one of the 2nd magnitude, six of the 3rd and twelve of the 4th. Alpha Cygni is called *Aried* or *Deneb*; it is on the left or east end of the upright and the brightest star in the constellation. Beta Cygni or Albireo is on the extreme right, in the beak of the swan or foot of the cross. It is not conspicuous being only of the 3rd magnitude but is a beautiful object in the telescope being resolved into two brilliant stars of blue and yellow, contrasting finely.

A very inconspicuous star in this constellation, 61 cygni, is in one respect the most noted in the northern hemisphere. Its parallax has been measured or it is found to make an angle with the diameter of the earth's orbit of 34 seconds. From this angle we get its distance, 412,000 times the diameter of the earth's orbit. Light which comes from the sun in 8 minutes would come from this star in $7\frac{1}{2}$ years.

61 cygni is the nearest star in the northern heavens and, with the exception of Alpha centauri, the nearest one known.

Herpetology.

CANDISONA EDWARDSII

A NEW CANADIAN RATTLESNAKE.

Read before the Natural history society of Toronto.

As there are specimens of *Candisona Tergeminus* in your collection, I have sent this to you for exhibition,

as being at least to me, new for a Canadian variety; and, if you place the two side by side, you will at once see the marked difference there is between them. I assure you I am not at all satisfied with a description given in Baird and Girard. In fact, at the present moment, there is no hand book of the North American reptilia, and the student has to do the best he can, to identify anything at all. It is useless for one to say anything, or to make disparaging remarks, but with the exception of Jordan's Manual, which is little better than a dry list, there is absolutely nothing that we have, that is the least reliable. Messrs Baird and Girard took a very great deal of honest pains, and did their best, with such alcoholic specimens as they had, but I certainly refuse alcoholic specimens, as test specimens, and they are so different from the living that a most minute and scientific description of an alcoholic specimen is but a burlesque and a travesty if compared with the living reptile.

But to return to the subject of the *Candisona Edwardsii*. I had heard from a young man, living in the northern portion of the County of Bruce, that he had lots of rattlesnakes in his vicinity, and he afterwards, at my request, sent me a few. They were the common *Crotalophorus Tergeminus* of B. & G., the prairie rattlesnake, or true *massasauga*, and I have had them alive for some time, but I have not had as yet, an opportunity to make any satisfactory experiments