

one end projecting. This, it is considered, accounts for its extreme rarity in the marine zoologist's hauls.

In the Fisheries Museum in Ottawa, a specimen of the egg of Chimæra is exhibited but the young fish had hatched out before it was obtained.

The scientific interest of a fish like Chimæra is very great. There are not more than three or four species now existing and they are widely scattered in the most diverse seas. No doubt it is an ancient type of fish and may be the last of a dying race. Its protocercal or equal-lobed tapering tail is more primitive than that of any other fish. In some points *e. g.* the spiral valve, the ventrally placed mouth, and the cartilaginous skeleton, it is allied to the sharks. Its naked skin is in contrast to both sharks and ganoids, while the operculum, almost enclosing the branchial apparatus, connects it with Ganoids and Teleosts. The teeth, ears and jaw cartilages are very peculiar, the palato-quadrate bar being unsegmented. Whether to class it with the sharks, or establish as Professor Huxley urged, a separate sub-class Holocephali, for these few fish, the Chimæras, scientific authorities are not yet agreed.

Linnæus called it Chimæra on account of its peculiar external aspect, but its anatomical and other features fully justify the name. It is at once a primitive, aberrant, and grotesque creature, with characteristics which are common to all the various sub-classes of the great class of fishes. It is in many respects one of the most generalised of existing fishes, and on that account it is of the highest scientific interest.

Marine Dept., Ottawa,

January, 1897.