

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1873

THE ZOOLOGICAL STATION AT NAPLES

ROME was not built in a day, says the proverb,—and so far, at least, the Zoological Station resembles the Eternal City,—for it is not yet quite finished.

The difficulties have been sufficient to explain this delay. The complexity of a building of this kind, which had to combine so many technical arrangements with scientific requirements without neglecting beauty of appearance and the comfort of a dwelling-house for the principal, assistant naturalists, and other officials, will easily be conceived by those who have ever attempted to carry out the plan of an establishment *sui generis*. Add to this, that the dimensions of the building were limited before a stone was laid, that the sums allotted for the construction were by no means unlimited, that all had to be done in so difficult a place as Naples, by a foreigner who never had experience in practical pursuits of this intricate nature, but is a naturalist, and not a business man

At the same time, one must not believe that this delay has been altogether a misfortune. Though the Zoological Station had to pass through more than one "crisis," it has been particularly lucky: dangerous as the aspect of all these critical situations seemed, nevertheless it has always escaped, and now finds itself in better circumstances than it would have been without them. This seems principally due to the fact that in struggling against difficulties and enemies, one is forced to strengthen and augment one's auxiliary troops, and thus the army of supporters gets greater and greater, and triumph is more easily secured than before.

As the outlay had been considerably increased in consequence of greater dimensions, and some internal arrangements, it became necessary to find additional funds. I am happy to say, that on my application, the German Empire, after having consulted the Berlin Academy of Sciences, consented to contribute 1,500*l*. The Italian Government likewise promised, on my personal application to the Minister of Finances, Dr. Sella, to remit the not unimportant sums that had to be paid as duties on the importation of the machinery and the great glasses.

On the other hand, I formed a new scheme for keeping up the establishment. Some of the readers of NATURE may remember, perhaps, that the whole place was founded upon the income of the Aquarium, which is combined with the Zoological Station. The bulk of the capital being augmented, and the whole establishment in all its parts increased, the sums necessary for supporting it likewise must increase. Instead of ten places to be given to foreign naturalists, who come to work in the Zoological Station, there are now twenty. The number of officials, scientific and unscientific, will increase at the same rate, and everything else, too. Desirable as such an event must be for science' sake, much as it would increase the importance of the new Institution, there can be no doubt that it would also greatly increase its annual wants.

I pursued, therefore, as much as I could, the plan for letting the tables in the laboratories,—a plan which has

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been spoken of in NATURE (vol. vi. p. 362). I am happy to say that at present Italy as well as Prussia has consented to hire each two tables. Bavaria, too, is likely to take one table, and further applications have been made to Saxony, to Baden, and some other places, which at present cannot be indicated, as negotiations are still impending.

The Library of the Station has made very important progress. The Zoological Society of London has generously granted the complete set of their Proceedings; the British Association the complete set of their Transactions. Dr. Engelmann, the Leipzig publisher, has again made a splendid gift of all that he has published since 1870; Viet and Co., of Leipzig, have given the eight last volumes of the *Archiv für Anatomie und Physiologie*: Friedlander, of Berlin, has sent some of his most valuable books; and single naturalists constantly send in their publications. The Catalogue of the whole Library will soon appear, and be delivered to the scientific public as Appendix to the *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Zoologie*.

The Station has already made its presence felt in the world of Zoology, by sending to Universities and Laboratories collections of Mediterranean animals. What makes this especially valuable is, that by the careful way in which the required specimens have been prepared and preserved, they are always capable of being dissected and even studied in a histological way, which seldom is the case with museum specimens. Thus the Universities of Marburg, Göttingen, Munich, Strasburg, Jena, and others, have received such collections as were asked for by the Professors of Zoology; besides this, the zoologists that passed during the last winter to Naples or Messina, have been always assisted by the scientific staff of the Station.

We have also succeeded in sending animals alive to distant places. Thus it has become very generally known that a small parcel containing some specimens of *Amphioxus* has been received as a charged letter in the Crystal Palace Aquarium; and I hear from Mr. Lloyd that the small animals are still alive. We succeeded also in sending some large crabs over by steamer.

It is my intention to develop as much as may be this department of the activity of the Station, and I take this opportunity of stating that the Station will send Mediterranean animals of every kind and in any state of preparation to those who make application for them. The charges will be as moderate as possible, always in accordance with the self-supporting principle, so as to enable every part of the establishment to provide for its own wants.

ANTON DOHRN

Naples, May 8

GAUDIN'S "WORLD OF ATOMS"

L'Architecture du Monde des Atomes, dévoilant la structure des composés chimiques et leur cristallogénie.
Par Marc-Antoine Gaudin. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1873.)

IT is now more than forty years since Ampère, in his lectures at the Collège de France, was discussing the evidence in favour of the existence of atoms, and the difficulties of any scientific investigation of their properties and relations. M. Gaudin, one of his hearers, was struck,

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