

these facts, though they afford a strong reason for avoiding any step which would really be likely to prevent the teaching of Latin in the lower forms of public schools, seem to be an insufficient reason for compelling those who do not get on with the subject to continue to study it up to the age of eighteen or nineteen years, when by dropping it in reasonable time they might turn to some, for them, more profitable study. It is often forgotten that when all boys learnt Latin and Greek and little else, but few of them stayed at school so late as great numbers do at present, and that therefore there is less reason for resisting a change in this direction now than there would have been in the days mentioned by General Sir G. T. Chesney, when cadets might enter Woolwich at the age of fourteen or fifteen years.

On the whole, therefore, our feeling is that the recommendation of the majority on this point goes in the right direction. The general position of Latin in the schools will surely be sufficiently protected by the action of the universities, and hence its serious discouragement need not be greatly feared. We would ask, however, whether the objections of the dissentient members of the committee could not be met by a requirement that all candidates should take for one of their subjects from Class II. a language. This would distinctly protect linguistic studies in the schools, and so act distinctly in favour of Latin, without compelling all candidates to offer

Latin, or handicapping any school which may prefer not to teach it in all its divisions. It has been said that the difficulty of Latin will prevent its being much adopted as a voluntary subject. Surely this must mean that too high a standard has been adopted for the circumstances of these candidates who cannot of course reach to the level of the higher classical forms. The Civil Service Commissioners should and could prevent any such unfairness as this from occurring, and therefore could prevent the subject from being killed, which surely all would regret.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S MENAGERIE.

ALTHOUGH it becomes more difficult year by year for the Zoological Society to add new objects to their collection of living animals, yet, as is shown by the annual reports read at the anniversary meetings, examples of a certain number of species which have not been "previously exhibited" are acquired every year. In 1892, as we are told in last year's report, specimens of 11 mammals, 20 birds, 14 reptiles, and one batrachian "referable to species not included in the last (eighth) edition of the 'List of Animals,'" were added to the series. In 1893, the numbers of novelties in the respective classes were hardly less numerous.



FIG. 1.—The Ounce or Snow-Leopard.

Some of the more noticeable among the recent additions we now propose to bring before the readers of this journal by illustrations drawn from the life by Mr. J. Smit, the principal artist employed by the Zoological Society.

(1) The Ounce or Snow-Leopard (*Felis uncia*).—The Society's lion-house always contains a good representative series of the larger species of cats (*Felis*), such as lions, tigers, pumas, leopards, and cheetahs. All do well in confinement, and probably live much longer in their cages in the Regent's Park than they would do in their native wilds, subject "to the struggle for existence." The jaguar is certainly less easy to obtain, and perhaps less suited to captivity than those already mentioned, but has always a place in the series. But the ounce, or "snow-leopard," as the Indian sportsmen call *Felis uncia*, is a much more difficult subject to deal with. In the first place, the snowy interior of Central Asia, where it lives, is by no means easy of access. In the second place, the animal when captured must "pass through the fire" of an Indian sea-port on its way home, and is not unlikely to succumb to such an ordeal. It was consequently, in spite of the exertions of their many Indian friends and

ing northwards to the Altai and to Amoor-land, and even, it is said by Schrenck, into the Island of Saghalin. But the story of the occurrence of the ounce in Asia Minor, credited by Mr. D. G. Elliot, who has figured this species in his "Monograph of the *Felida*," is, as has been subsequently shown, altogether apocryphal, the animal mistaken for the ounce in this district being simply a pale variety of the leopard (*Felis pardus*).

(2) The Cunning Bassaris (*Bassaris astuta*).—The racoons and their allies form a peculiar family of carnivora restricted to the New World with one special exception, *Elurus* of the Himalayas. One of the most singular and interesting genera of this group is *Bassaris*, of Central America, of which two species are known, *B.*



FIG. 2.—The Cunning Bassaris.

correspondents, not until 1891 that the Zoological Society acquired their first specimen of the ounce. This, however, was a mere kitten, in feeble condition, and, notwithstanding the care lavished on it, did not live many weeks. But in the spring of the present year the Society were more fortunate, having received a fine young male of this animal from the Western Himalayas. It was originally captured, when quite small, by the retainers of Thakur Debi Chand, a native chieftain of Gundla, in Lahaul, in the Western Himalayas, and was sent as a present to Mrs. Mackay, of Dunbar House, Kullu. Mrs. Mackay made a complete pet of it, and brought it up most carefully by hand. It is now nearly full-grown, measuring upwards of six feet in length, and is in splendid health and condition.

In its native state the ounce is said to live amongst the rocks at an elevation of 9000 feet and upwards, on the borders of the snows in the Himalayas and Thibet. It preys upon the wild sheep and goats, and probably also upon the rodents that inhabit these inhospitable regions. In similar situations the ounce is said to be found throughout the higher districts of Central Asia, extend-

NO. 1284, VOL. 50]



FIG. 3.—The Grey Coly-strike.

astuta of Texas, California, and Northern Mexico, and its southern representative, *B. sumichrasti* of Southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. It is the former of these two species of which an example has recently been acquired by the Zoological Society after a period of forty years, during which, so far as it is known, no *bassaris* has reached Europe alive.

The cunning *bassaris* is of about the size of a small domestic cat, but more slender in form, and provided with a long cylindrical white tail, which is crossed by seven or eight distinct black rings, rendering it the most conspicuous feature of the animal. In a state of nature the *bassaris* lives among wooded rocks, but often takes up its abode close to houses, and proceeds to ravage the pigeons and poultry. The genus *Bassaris* was originally

referred by systematists to the *Viverridae*, but Sir William Flower's account of its anatomy, published in 1869 (*P.Z.S.* 1869, p. 31), has placed its correct systematic position among the *Procyonidae* beyond question.

(3) The Grey Coly-strike (*Hypocolius ampelinus*).—For their living specimens of this rare and beautiful passerine bird, which will be found lodged in one of the large cages in the parrot-house, the Society are indebted to their excellent correspondent Mr. W. D. Cumming, of Fao, on the Persian Gulf. The coly-strike has obtained its name, together with its scientific appellation *Hypocolius*, from some fancied resemblance to the African colies (*Colius*), with which, however, it has really nothing to do, though the tints of its plumage exhibit some slight similarity to the above-mentioned form. But *Hypocolius* is a true passerine bird; probably belonging to the caterpillar-hunters (*Campophagidae*), though this is by no means certain. It was first discovered by the French collector Botta, on the coast of Abyssinia, and described from his specimens by Bonaparte. The German naturalist Heuglin obtained examples of it in 1850 from Massowah,



FIG. 4.—Lesueur's Water-lizard.

in the same district. It was rather a surprise to naturalists when the bird was found to extend far into Central Asia. In March 1875, Mr. Blandford obtained specimens of *Hypocolius* in Upper Sind which were ascertained not to differ from African examples, and since then Mr. Cumming has, as already mentioned, found it not uncommon in the vicinity of Fao, on the Persian Gulf. Our figure, which has been kindly lent to us by the authorities of the Zoological Society of London, represents both sexes of this bird during their attempts at nest-making in the Zoological Society's aviary.

(4) Lesueur's Water-lizard (*Physignathus lesueuri*).—Some very strange forms of Agamoid lizards are found in Australia, such as *Chlamydosaurus kingi* with its conspicuous frill, and *Moloch horridus* with its coat of spikes, pronounced by an American writer to be "one of the most repulsive creatures in nature"! The lizard which we now figure, though belonging to the same family, is, however, rather elegant in shape, and bright in colour.

NO. 1284, VOL. 50]

It is a member of the Agamoid genus *Physignathus*, of which seven species are recognised by Mr. Boulenger in his "Catalogue of Lizards." Of these four are inhabitants of Australia, whilst one comes from Timor Lant, and the remaining two are found in Cochinchina and Siam. The name is taken from the bladder-like expansion of the lower angle of the jaw, which is very striking in these lizards.

In habits the *Physignathi* are said to be aquatic, inhabiting the trees on the margins of rivers, and swimming well with the aid furnished by the wide expansion of the horizontal fringes of scales on the sides of their long stout toes.

The Zoological Society's specimen of this lizard—so far as is known the first that has reached Europe alive—was received, along with other Australian reptiles, in exchange from the Australian Museum, Sydney.

NOTES.

PROF. ROBERTS-AUSTEN has been awarded, by the Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie Nationale of Paris, a prize of 2000 frs. for his recent researches on alloys, and more particularly for those which relate to the behaviour of metals and alloys at high temperatures and to their mechanical properties as influenced by small quantities of added elements.

AT the last general meeting of the Zoological Society, it was announced by the Council that they had resolved to bestow the silver medal of the Society on Mr. Henry Hamilton Johnson, C.B., H.B.M. Commissioner and Consul-General for British Central Africa, in acknowledgment of the efforts he had made to increase our knowledge of the zoology of British Central Africa.

WE regret to learn that the American journal *Science* has been discontinued owing to insufficiency of support. The first number appeared on February 9, 1883, and though the circulation, after fluctuating, has steadily increased during the last two years, the paper has never paid expenses.

THE Salters' Company have recently established in connection with the medical school of St. Thomas's Hospital a Research Fellowship in Experimental Pharmacology of the annual value of £100. The Fellow elected, who may hold the office for three years, will be required to devote himself to the study of the physiological action of drugs. The Salters' Company have also endowed a similar Research Fellowship in Chemistry in connection with the research laboratory of the Pharmaceutical Society, in order to provide for investigations on the chemical side of pharmacology.

THE Prince Jablonowski Society of Leipzig has just issued the subject for the mathematical competition of 1897. It is well known that the methods of integrating partial differential equations of the second and higher orders, due to Monge, Ampère, and Darboux, can only be applied to equations which have solutions in common with other equations, which solutions are not entirely dependent upon arbitrary constants. On the other hand, it follows from Lie's investigations of infinite groups that equations admitting of an infinite group of contact transformations have in general this relation of involution to other equations. The problem proposed by the Society is that of developing the methods of integration indicated, and to illustrate them by the most instructive and completely worked-out examples. The prize offered consists of 1000 marks (about £50). Full particulars are given in the annual report of the Society, 1894.