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J. Smith del.

TAPIRUS DOWII

Harvard. 1881.

Mr. Sclater exhibited a drawing by Mr. Smit (Plate XXIII.) of the Tapir presented to the Society by Mr. Fritz Zucher on the 13th of August last, and read extracts from some letters received from Mr. Zucher on the subject, whereby it appeared that this animal had been captured on the Yuruari river in Venezuela when about eight months old (as was believed), and had been kept 15 months in captivity before being forwarded to this country. Its probable age was therefore now about three years.

Mr. Sclater pointed out that in colour this animal appeared to agree better with the figure of *Tapirus dowi* (as represented in Godman and Salvin's Biol. Centr.-Am., Mamm. p. 104, t. ix.) than with the ordinary *Tapirus americanus*; and suggested that it was quite likely that the former species might be the Tapir of the lower Andean range of Venezuela. But this point could only be decided by anatomical examination after the death of the animal.

Mr. J. E. Harting, F.Z.S., called attention to the desirability of adopting a standard of nomenclature for the description of the colours of natural objects, and made the following remarks:—

“In the animal kingdom the number of colours is very great. They often form the most striking feature in the external appearance of species, and hence have been considered by systematists as affording distinguishing characters of much value. But an object may be described as of one colour by one person, and be taken by another person for quite a different tint; for the names of colours are frequently misapplied, and one name is often indiscriminately given to many colours. Hence arises an uncertainty in reading, and a perplexity in writing, a description, which would be obviated were some standard of nomenclature available for general reference.

“So long ago as 1821, there appeared a manual the utility of which seems to have been quite lost sight of, owing perhaps chiefly to the fact that it has long been out of print and difficult to procure—namely, Werner's ‘Nomenclature of Colours,’ edited by Syme. This work, excellent in principle, was designed to meet the very want which I now venture to express, but which was hardly experienced at the date of its publication, inasmuch as it was not then the general practice to publish the careful and detailed descriptions of species with which we are now familiar. Thus the book was neglected, and is now almost forgotten.

“In my humble opinion, if a new edition of this work were to appear it would be extremely useful to zoologists, not only in this country, but in other parts of the world—wherever, in fact, zoological science is cultivated.

“Assuming the want of such a standard nomenclature and the desirability of satisfying it, I venture to think that in no way could this be better accomplished than by the publication of a new edition of Werner's ‘Nomenclature of Colours’ under the auspices of this Society.

“Such a course would ensure the speedy adoption of the standard,