INTRODUCTION.

1. Principal Faunal Works on the Fresh-water Fishes of Mexico and Central America.

The fresh-water fishes of Mexico and Central America are included in Jordan and Evermann’s great work on the fishes of North and Middle America (Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus. xlvii. 1896–1900), which is, however, so far as the Central-American fresh-water fish-fauna is concerned, rather a compilation than a critical revision; and necessarily so, seeing that the majority of the types are preserved in the British Museum and a large proportion of the remainder at Vienna. Dr. S. E. Meek has recently made extensive collections in Mexico, and has published an account of the fresh-water fishes of Mexico north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Publ. Columbian Mus., Zool. v. 1904) based on his own material. Of other works dealing with Mexican fresh-water fishes we may mention Girard’s valuable report on the fishes collected during the United States and Mexico boundary survey, published in 1859, Steindachner’s report on a collection from the Lerma Basin and the Valley of Mexico (Denkschr. Ak. Wien, lxii. 1895), and a paper by Jordan and Snyder dealing with fishes from the same region (Bull. U.S. Fish. Comm. xix. 1900).

Dr. Günther’s memoir on the Fishes of Central America (Trans. Zool. Soc. Lond. vi. 1868) is still the best account of the fresh-water fishes of this region, and it is remarkable how little our knowledge of them has been increased since its publication. It was preceded by Kner and Steindachner’s account of a collection from Panama (Abhandl. Bayer. Ak. x. 1864), and the only important contributions since are by Gill and Bransford on the fishes of Lake Nicaragua (Proc. Ac. Philad. 1877), Steindachner on those of the Rio Mamoni, Panama (Denkschr. Ak. Wien, xli. 1879), and two recent papers by Meek, one on the fishes of Lakes Managua and Nicaragua, the other describing collections from Guatemala and Costa Rica (Publ. Columbian Mus., Zool. vii. 1907).

2. Principal Collections Described in This Work.

The present account is based on the specimens preserved in the British Museum, including the actual types of a large proportion of the species and co-types or authenticated examples of many others.

First in importance are the large collections made in Central America by Messrs. F. D. Godman and O. Salvin and Capt. J. M. Dow during the years 1859–1865, which formed the basis of Dr. Günther’s report.

Next to these must be placed a fine series of Mexican fishes received from the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, in 1905, including examples of many of the species recently described by Dr. Meek.