INTRODUCTION.

The volume which these lines preface comprises nine families of Coleoptera, and registers as inhabiting Central America 1790 determined species belonging to them, in addition to a few left unnamed for want of sufficient material; of the total number, 1470 are described as new, and 168 new genera are characterized.

The Haliplidae (the first of the nine families) is a small assemblage of three or four genera, closely allied to the Carabidae, but aquatic in habits, and presenting no special interest in a faunistic point of view; we have, indeed, only six species belonging to it.

The Dytiscidae are a much larger family, and we record 168 Central-American species; this may be roughly estimated as about one tenth of the total species known from all parts of the world; they are all aquatic. Our Gyrinidae amount to 20 species; the number recorded in M. Regimbart’s recent monograph of the family being 266 for the whole world.

The Hydrophilidae have at present 141 Central-American species, the total number of described species of the family being probably under 1000.

The next four families are all of small extent, and have respectively the following number of species:—Heteroceridae 9, Parnidae 39, Georissidae 1, Cyathoceridae 1. The Parnidae inhabit, as a rule, small streams; the thirty-nine species of our region comprise no less than seven new genera, and are specially interesting, as giving, for the first time, fair grounds for the belief that the tropical regions of the world possess numerous representatives of this family.

The family Cyathoceridae, consisting of a single species, is, so far as at present known, peculiar to our region, but will probably be found to inhabit South America also.