

INTRODUCTION.

THE present volume, the first of the Coleoptera of the 'Biologia Centrali-Americana,' completes the first two families—Cicindelidæ and Carabidæ—of this great order of insects. Thanks chiefly to the four years' researches of Mr. Champion in Guatemala and the State of Panama; the collections formed by M. Sallé and Herr Höge, supplemented by M. Boucard, M. Flohr, and others, in Mexico; the labours of Mr. Belt in Nicaragua, and of Mr. Rogers and Van Patten in Costa Rica, material has been furnished to enable us to present an approximately complete fauna of the region embraced by our work in these two important families. Some parts of the region undoubtedly have not yet been sufficiently explored, and many additional species may be expected, as indeed is the case with other much better known parts of the world of similar extent; but enough is perhaps known to enable us to form some idea of the relations of the fauna in this department to those of other parts of America and other tropical countries. The few remarks which it seems necessary here to make on this subject must, however, be of a very general nature, a complete review being impossible from the circumstance that the Coleopterous fauna of no other tropical area of similar extent, at least in respect of the two families in question, has ever yet been worked out.

The number of the species of the two families recorded in this volume is 1086, belonging to 154 genera. This is less than a tenth of the total number at present described from the whole world, which cannot be much less than 12,000. It is larger, however, than the apparent poverty of tropical regions in Carabidæ would have led us to expect. The tolerably well-worked valley of the Amazons, although rich in species of genera confined to alluvial plains, and in arboreal forms, contains only 576 species belonging to 124 genera; and the fauna of such tropical regions as the Malay archipelago is evidently still poorer. On the other hand the European fauna contains 1750 species belonging to 114 genera (Stein's Cat. 1877), and temperate North America 1211 species belonging to about 130 genera, a total which has been largely increased