

OBSERVATIONS ON SIREDON LICHENOIDES.

By WM. E. CARLIN.

Como Lake is a body of water about two miles and a half in circumference. It has no known outlet, but is fed by a stream of pure spring water about 2 feet wide and a foot deep, which, continually running, prevents the lake's absorption by evaporation. The lake is quite shallow and can be easily waded at almost any part, being not more than 10 feet deep in the deepest place that I have been able to find. The bottom of the lake is soft and is covered in most places with grass and weeds. The water is strongly impregnated with alkali, and a large number of cattle are said to have died a number of years ago from drinking it. It is very disagreeable to the taste. The amount of water varies about 14 inches during the year, being highest in the spring from the melting snows, and lowest in the autumn. This is the home of the *Siredon lichenoides* (Baird). They never enter the stream of fresh water, preferring the alkali water of the lake. They seem to suffer no inconvenience, however, if placed in fresh water. I have caught as many as a hundred and fifty and placed them in a cauf, and have never had one die from the change. The change to fresh water undoubtedly hastens the metamorphosis into the *Amblystoma* form, as I have noticed quite a change in the course of twenty-four hours in individuals placed in the cauf, while an equal number kept in the alkali water in the boat have shown no change in any of them in several days. I have kept six at different times in jars of fresh water until they have completed their metamorphosis. I made no systematic note of appearance from day to day, but my observation was careful and regular. In two cases the change in external appearance was so abrupt that I would have been almost certain that another salamander had been substituted for the one in the jar had I not had him so completely under observation that it was impossible. The gills had assumed a stubby form about half the length that they were the night before, and the gill on the back of the body was nearly half gone; it took air quite often, and I removed it from the jar and placed it in a box with some lake grass around it to keep it moist. It completed the metamorphosis in a few days. I did not feed it any during this time. While it was in the jar it was well fed with flies. The jar was placed upon a table in the telegraph office. The flies at first had to be pushed in front of it with a pencil. It finally got to know that tapping the jar with a pencil meant a fly, and would rise to the surface immediately and snap at whichever it saw first, pencil or fly. It furnished train-men continual amusement while here, and they kept it constantly gorged. Those that I kept well fed in jars and seldom changed the water, say once in three days, usually began to show a slight change in from two to three weeks,

and all of them completed the change into the *Amblystoma* inside of six weeks, while I have had but three changes of those kept in the cauf (sixty of them) in three months. During that time they have not been fed at all. The *Siredon mexicanus* is said to never undergo the transformation in its home, and Professor Marsh doubts that it ever makes it here. This doubt I can put at rest. They do make the change here, and in large numbers. During the latter part of the month of July and the entire month of August, if the day is rainy or misty, they come from the lake in to the shore in large numbers, and secrete themselves under some piece of wood or rock where they can keep moist. Sometimes they venture out in a shower, and the sun catches them before they can obtain shelter either in the lake or under cover, and in a few minutes kills them. They can be found dried hard anywhere about the lake, on the shore or in the grass. While catching *Siredon* I have seen and caught a number of *Amblystoma* in the lake, with the metamorphosis, as far as I could see, as complete as those we find half a mile from the lake. They cover the ground by thousands during a warm summer rain, coming from every conceivable place where they could have found shelter, from under rocks, boards, old ties, and out of gopher holes. I have a cat that eats them greedily. She has fished several out of jars on the table and devoured them during the night when there was no one to watch her; and I am told by a resident that the numerous skunks that live around the lake live principally on them. They are of two colors, a blackish green and a yellowish green color. I have had two of the blackish green complete the change in sequence, while one of the yellowish green was completing it under the same circumstances of change of water and food. I think this will be found to be the result in all similar cases. I have caught them in all stages of growth and in all stages of their changes into the *Amblystoma* state. During the months of July and August they lie close to the shore of the lake, where it is shallow; but after the first frost they disappear completely, or at least I have never been able to find them. I think they must bury themselves in the mud at the bottom of the lake, as I have stirred up the grass often and have not seen them issue from it.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF FISH BY POISONOUS WATER IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

By JOSEPH Y. PORTER, Assistant Surgeon, U. S. A.

UNITED STATES ARMY HOSPITAL,
OFFICE OF POST SURGEON, KEY WEST BARRACKS, FLA.,
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PROFESSOR: I forward you to-day by express a small box containing a quart of Gulf water, procured 20 miles from this port. I enclose you a slip of paper taken from the "Key of the Gulf," a local of this place, which in its turn clipped it from the "Forest and Stream." It seems to be