

A PROVISIONAL SYNOPSIS OF RECENT CEPHALOPODA.

THE latest attempt to give a complete systematic account of the Cephalopoda is that of Tryon, published in 1879;¹ but it labours under several disadvantages—the first and most serious being that the author has given almost all his attention to Conchology properly so-called, and has apparently treated the Cephalopods rather with a view of making his Manual complete than from any special interest in them; secondly, the mode of arrangement adopted of placing all the synonymy in the form of an alphabetical index at the end of the volume renders it exceedingly difficult to ascertain what he includes under each species, and, furthermore, a large number of new forms have been described since the publication of his work, and several important contributions have been made to our knowledge of the relations of previously described groups.

Under these circumstances it appeared that the compilation of such a list as the present, even though it might fail, indeed necessarily must fail, to give a completely satisfactory survey of the class, would nevertheless be of considerable use to workers in this interesting branch of Malacology, were it only as a reliable index to the literature of the subject, and I therefore resolved to draw up in a form fit for publication the material gathered for use in my own investigations, and received Mr. Murray's assent to its being included in the present Report. I should, however, be doing injustice to Mr. Tryon did I not acknowledge my indebtedness to his elaborate and careful index.

At present no systematic treatment of the whole class of Cephalopoda can hope to be other than provisional, such a large percentage of the published descriptions of species being inaccurate or insufficient for modern requirements, that nothing satisfactory can be obtained until some worker shall do for this group what Lyman did for the Ophiuroidea and Agassiz for the Echini,—travel to the various museums and re-examine all such type specimens as are at present extant; and in the present instance it would be particularly desirable that he should have the opportunity of comparing the different specimens side by side.

With respect to the list itself, I have endeavoured to give a reference to the original creation of each species and such others as might be necessary to indicate the important points in its history, or good descriptions and figures of it; save in one or two cases of

¹ Manual of Conchology, vol. i.