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AND
OÖLOGIST.



VOL. VIII., 1883.

BIRDS: THEIR NESTS AND EGGS.

PUBLISHED BY
JOSEPH M. WADE,
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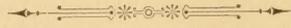
IMMORTAL WILSON,

THE ILLUSTRIOUS AUDUBON,

AND THE

DEVOTED NUTTALL.


 ORNITHOLOGIST AND OOLOGIST
 



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ORNITHOLOGIST AND OOLOGIST.

→① PREFACE. ②←

The object of this magazine is to collect and disseminate a knowledge of Bird Life, and cultivate a desire for observation in Ornithology and Oology in the rising generation, and place on record their discoveries and observations. It will sustain the taking of specimens when necessary for identification, also for collections when from regions of plenty, but it will suggest other methods of identification equally practicable to those who object to destroying life, and cultivate a love of Bird Life about our homes, and a desire to increase rare birds by introduction rather than kill off those that venture among us. It will avoid the technical as much as possible, and make itself fully understood by the general reader.

JOS. M. WADE.

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VOL. VIII.

BOSTON, JANUARY, 1883.

No. 1.

Breeding Habits of the Carolina and American Eared Grebes.

Podilymbus podiceps and *Dytes nigricollis Californicus*.

For several years I have given some attention to the Grebes, and am satisfied that the eggs of the smaller species are often confounded. Have carefully examined more than a hundred nests of the Carolina, and a large number of the Eared, but know nothing of the Horned, having never seen a nest, and offer these notes for publication hoping they will draw out some further information, and that some competent person will give us in the O. and O. a full description of the nest of the Horned Grebe. The eggs of all three are very similar, but I think the nests, when well understood, will afford a certain means of identification. It certainly will of the two species under consideration. The Carolina breed plentifully in Wis., and at least as far west as middle Dakota. I have only found the Eared breeding in Dakota, but learn from good authority that they are common in Minn., but have never heard of their breeding east of the Mississippi river. Do not think the Horned Grebe breeds in any part of this region. The most remarkable thing about the Carolina is their shyness in the breeding season. Weeks may be spent in their haunts without seeing a single one, and they are often quite common where their presence is not suspected. Was among them in Dakota five weeks; found numerous nests and do not remember to have seen a single bird, except when caught in traps set on nests. This applies only to the breeding

season; at other times they are tame enough, and can be seen anywhere. It is doubtless this feature, more than anything else, that has confused collectors. On many of the small lakes the Eared Grebes are seen in pairs, or small flocks, and on searching in the adjoining weeds and rushes Grebe's nests are found which it is natural to suppose belong to the birds seen, and to make the confusion worse, the Eared is sometimes taken for the Horned, and the eggs marked accordingly. So it may happen that the eggs of the Carolina Grebe are marked Eared, or Horned, as the collector calls the birds seen.

I will try to describe the nest of each species minutely enough to enable anybody to identify them on sight. The Carolina, or thick billed Grebe, breeds in lakes and sloughs, among thick rushes, reeds or grass where the water is two or three feet deep. The old decaying rushes or reeds are pulled together by the bird, and continually piled upon each other till the fabric rises above the water. On this the nest is built, made of moss and debris brought up from the bottom. The structure is large under water, often as large as a bushel basket. It generally floats, but sometimes reaches the bottom. Above water the nest is small, just large enough to hold the eggs, and is almost always wet. The eggs, six to nine in number, are clear, bluish-white at first, but soon become stained by contact with the wet nest. They are always covered in the absence of the bird. It is surprising how quick and effectually they will do this and get away without being seen. The nest when filled

with eggs nicely covered, resembles a floating bunch of half decayed moss, showing above the water about the size of an inverted soup-plate, and would be rarely noticed by a person unacquainted with it. I found my first nest by accident, and could hardly believe that little bunch of wet stuff was a bird's nest, but I secreted myself and watched with a glass until the bird returned, which I at once recognized as a Carolina Grebe. After this I had no trouble in finding more nests, and by setting traps upon them caught several birds and fully identified the species. The nests are all much alike, and entirely different from any other with which I am acquainted. They are always built in places protected from high waves, or they would be speedily overwhelmed.

The Eared Grebe breeds in communities. The first colony that I found was in a small lake in northern Dakota. The nests were built on floating debris about fifteen rods from shore, where the water was perhaps three feet deep. Old flag leaves, rushes, reeds, etc., had been driven by the wind into the point of a bay, forming a mass two or three inches deep and several square rods in extent. This mass was firm enough to hold up the birds in most places, but was full of holes where they could dive through. There were at least twenty-five nests, on an area of ten by twenty feet. They were made of partly decayed moss and reeds brought up from the bottom, were small, not more than a handful of material to a nest. The eggs are clear, blueish-white at first, but soon get discolored by the wet nest. No nest in this colony contained more than four eggs, but in other places five have been found. The birds generally cover all. The situation of their nests was entirely open, the shore was high and completely overlooked them. I sat on the shore and with a glass saw the birds building nests and setting on their eggs. As we approached in a boat they did not seem very shy; did not

begin to leave till we were quite near them. Most of them covered their eggs more or less before leaving. They mostly dove directly from nest and came up near in a flock. A few ran out and joined the flock without diving. Another small colony of these birds built their nests on bunches of broken down rushes. The nests were small and just above the water. No person familiar with the breeding habits of these birds could mistake the nest of one for the other. The Carolina nest singly, in thick rushes, weeds or grass, sometimes a long distance from open water, build the foundation of nest, which is large, always cover their eggs with great care when leaving them, are very shy, never seen near their nest, lay from six to nine eggs, begin laying in Wisconsin by the 10th of May, in Dakota about the 20th.

The Eared builds in communities, in open situations near open water, make a small nest, on some existing foundation, cover eggs partly, or not at all, are not particularly shy, are often seen near nest, lay four or five eggs, do not begin laying till June. I have carefully measured thirty eggs of each variety. The Carolina average: 1.69×1.17 . The Eared 1.75×1.19 . Contrary to my expectations the Eared are the largest.—*B. F. Goss, Pewaukee, Wis.*

EXPLANATION.—The ground owls do not always lay more eggs than those inhabiting trees, for I have known Wilson's Short-ear to lay five, the Barn Owl seven, and heard of Great Horned Owls with four. The Barn Owl does not seem to lay more in the ground burrows than in trees or caves, but varies much in number. I think it is dependent on amount of food and perhaps of room. I suspect the little Burrowing Owl of Polygamy in some cases, or perhaps it is parasitism.—*J. G. Cooper, M. D., Hayward, Cal.*

[We thank Dr. Cooper for his reply, for it is in that way we can get at facts. We have in our collection Burrowing Owl 10, Barn Owl 8 and 7, Short-eared Owl 8, Snowy Owl 6, Gray Owl 4, Long-eared Owl 5, Hawk Owl 6, Mottled Owl 4, Great-horned Owl 3 and Barred Owl 3. The remarks on Burrowing Owl will call for further careful observations—*Ed.*]

Horned Grebe in Conn.

While in the fields, July 26, my spaniel flushed a peculiar looking bird which I easily captured alive and found to my surprise it was a male Horned Grebe, *Dytas auritus*.

I kept it in a tank of water and fed it flies and bugs, and for nine days it did well and seemed to be very contented and would dive with great dexterity. When approached it would utter a pitiful cry. Upon the tenth day it refused food and died.

It was very graceful in water, but when out it could not walk; but by the aid of its wings could travel three or four feet, then would tumble. When found by the dog it was in an open lot and nearly one-half a mile from any water. I am unable to find any one that has ever seen or heard of this species being found in this vicinity before. I now have it mounted and it makes a valuable addition to my case of water birds.—*Chas. A. Thompson, Melrose, Ct.*

Rare Specimens at Bangor, Me.

HAWK OWL shot Oct. 28th, and two fine specimens of the Rough-legged Hawk, both females, one in light stage of plumage, and one in the dark stages. These birds are very rare in this State, also an Albino Ruffed Grouse showing entire light plumage, not pure white, but of a light cream color throughout. Harry Merrill has a specimen showing one or two white primaries, but this is the only perfect Albino I remember of being taken in this section. It is a male and its ruffs, although quite large are so near the shade of neck and back as to be scarcely discernable at first sight. It was taken at Danforth, Me., Nov. 10. One Mottled Owl was killed Oct. 8th, by the skillful use of a bow and arrow in the hands of a would be Indian. I remember but one other taken in this vicinity.

SNOWY OWLS, unusually thick, have already received five.—*E. S. Bowler, Bangor, Maine.*

Fishing and Catching Ducks.

I was told by a Chicagoian (a fisherman) that while fishing in Lake Michigan for Trout, Pickerel, etc., with set lines, he had often caught ducks instead of fish in 125 feet of water. Not believing this story I went to another person whose word I could rely upon, Capt. Nathan Saunders, wholesale fish dealer, Water street, Chicago, and he corroborated his statement and said that while in Green Bay, Wis., often he would leave his lines set for twenty-four hours in 200 feet of water and upon returning he could see no ducks in sight, and yet upon hauling up the lines would find a duck upon the hook instead of a fish. I call this a rather novel way of duck hunting or fishing. I have heard of catching ducks on hooks before, but not at such a great depth. Mr. Saunders is a good, reliable man.—*Wm. P. Tarrant, Saratoga.*

BARRED OWLS.—What is the matter with the Barred Owls? Sage and I have had more brought in than we could attend to this Fall, and Sage tells of a taxidermist in Hartford who has had ten. I guess the crop was good last season.—*W. W. Coe.*

CANADA GOOSE.—Wing-broke a Canada Goose a year ago last Spring. I cut off the wing where it was broken and it healed over nicely. The bird is as tame as can be, eating almost out of my children's hands. I tried to get a cross with a tame goose and tried a gander, as I could not determine the sex, but had no success. Shall try again next Spring. I also have a Great-horned Owl in a large cage which I have had two years. Have lots of fun with him putting in live chickens, &c. I am only waiting, in case it happens to be of the right sex, to have her lay me a couple of sets of eggs every Spring, and then I think I shall have it down fine. You see I am getting too lazy to go out and climb trees fifty feet high for them in February.—*W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn.*

The Linnæan Society.

The Linnæan Society was founded March 7, 1878, in New York City, by the following named gentlemen: H. B. Bailey, Franklin Benner, Eugene P. Bicknell, John Burroughs, Harold Herrick, Dr. Frederick H. Hoadley, Ernest Ingersoll, Newbold T. Lawrence, C. Hart Merriam, M. D., William C. Osborn. The original officers were: C. Hart Merriam, M. D., Pres.; Harold Herrick, Vice-Pres.; Ernest Ingersoll, Sec.; H. B. Bailey, Cor. Sec. and Treas. The officers for the present year are: Eugene P. Bicknell, Pres.; H. B. Bailey, Vice-Pres.; L. S. Foster, Recording Sec.; Newbold T. Lawrence, Cor. Sec. and Treas. Eugene P. Bicknell, C. Hart Merriam, M. D., and Newbold T. Lawrence are the present Committee on Publications.

The Society have just issued their first volume of Transactions which is a large octavo volume of 168 pages, wide margin, heavy book paper, tinted. The frontispiece is a finely engraved portrait of Linnæus, after an old engraving in the possession of Mr. L. S. Foster, by whom it was contributed.

The Society is to be congratulated on having Mr. L. S. Foster among its members, for he has given us a volume of Transactions that excel those issued by any previous society, and has proved by this volume that he is an "artist in the art preservative of all arts." May the present high standard of the society be always maintained.

The volume before us contains three papers, as follows: First—The vertebrates of the Adirondack region, by Clinton Hart Merriam, M. D.; Second—Is not the Fish Crow, (*Corvus ossifragus*, Wilson) a Winter as well as a Summer resident at the Northern limit of its range? by William Dutcher; Third—A Review of the Summer Birds of a part of the Catskill Mountains, with prefatory remarks on the Faunal and Floral Features of the Region, by Eugene Pintard

Bicknell. These papers have been prepared with great care and are intended to be widely read. There is not a line that the boy Naturalist cannot understand and appreciate as well as the advanced Scientist. The Society have wisely put a price on the work so that all can secure a copy.

Price in paper covers, \$2, in cloth binding, \$3. Our foreign readers can secure copies from W. Wesley, 28 Essex-street, Strand, London, England.

Brief Newsy Notes.

CANADA BUNTINGS.—W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn., reports, Nov. 14th, first flock of Buntings. Two were shot.

WHITE HERON (*Herodias alba egretta*), shot at Saybrook, Conn., Aug. 11, 1882, by Mr. J. R. Chalker, and is now in my cabinet.—*Jno. H. Sage, Portland, Conn.*

SNOWY OWL shot at Portland, Conn., about Nov. 18th and kept alive for some time. It was almost white.—*J. H. Sage, Portland, Conn.*

ALBINO.—I have this Fall succeeded in taking in good plumage a beautiful snow white Hawk, *Buteo borealis albino*, female, average size. A few feathers on back of head are tipped with brown. Has nested in an adjoining town for four years. None of the young exhibited any traces of albinism. Are there many cases of albinism with this species or with raptores in general? Of course I have spared no pains to make a first class specimen, and he is a beauty—*Geo. M. Marchres, Albany, Vt.*

P. S.—Our Northern birds are coming early this Winter. The Red-polls, Pinefinch, Pine Grosbeaks, have been with us about two weeks.

WOOD THRUSHES.—In my article on Wood Thrushes in O. and O. for November, the printer omitted a few words that would have given the reader a more sensible statement. The sentence "I visited the nest the next day," should have read "I visited the nest of the Wood Thrush the next day," &c.—*Chas. Edw. Prior.*

Field Glass.

The preliminary work of identification is a fascinating pastime of itself, and perhaps a few will be content to stop here, at least, until a complete list of the resident birds is obtained. There are others, however, who will wish to go deeper into the study at once. The field is a wide one and the ramifications of study are as various and complex as the most enthusiastic workers could desire.

Some pretty discouraging advice has been given by would be authorities concerning the first steps to be taken in this study. We are told not to ogle the birds with a glass, but to shoot them forthwith.

Original research may have required this, and now, in the case of a strange bird, it may be necessary at times to kill it. But for ordinary workers, and for purposes of outdoor study, a live bird, with its habits, habitat, and surroundings, is worth any number of dead birds in the hand.

Boys and girls should be able to study birds from this standpoint. A few women are interested—many more would be, had the proper encouragement been given.

A bird may often be identified by a less number of points than those given in the usual descriptions. I have often felt the need of a text-book which should give just enough of these points and no more. A book of this kind would be greatly appreciated by those studying in this way. For instance: The size being given, the small Maryland Yellow-throat ought to be known by the broad black patch from the forehead through the eye back to the neck, and the rich yellow chin, throat and breast. The black patches look like velvet ear caps run in the direction of the body. The Black and White Creeper needs but little description. It is about the size of a Sparrow and, excepting the belly, is streaked entirely in black and white. The chestnut crown of the Chippy, the pink

bill and feet of the Field Sparrow, the breast markings of the Song Sparrow and its song, the deep color of the Indigo Bird and its peculiar warble, the black cap of the Chickadee, the two broad black bands around the neck of the Killdeer Plover, and the black crescent on the breast of the Golden-winged Woodpecker ought to be sufficient, with measurements, to enable one to identify them.

As soon as a bird is under observation an earnest effort should be made to learn its various calls and songs. These are often necessary factors where doubt exists on other points. A good illustration of this is seen in the first attempts of the novice to identify the Pewees. These birds are colored somewhat alike, having no very prominent or contrasting marks. There is considerable difference, however, in their notes. The Phœbe's note is livelier and more rapid than the Wood Pewee's. The latter is a long drawn, plaintive note, which has been aptly called "a human sigh." Another decisive point is the time of arrival in the Spring. The Phœbe arrives a month earlier than the Wood Pewee, sometimes by the middle of March. Then we shall see it often in the woods in the vicinity of water and along the water courses. Another good illustration of the value of a note is seen in that of the Yellow-breasted Chat. The first time I ever saw this bird my attention was arrested by a note, somewhat rapidly repeated, which seemed in every sense of the word a Chat. I soon saw the bird with its yellow breast and the name suggested itself at once. In this case the note was quite as important as the color of the plumage. Illustrations of this kind could be greatly multiplied.

If you are in earnest, ways will soon be found, perhaps original ways of your own, to enable you to become acquainted with every bird to be seen.

It is a pretty little game, from first to last, a sort of hide-and-seek affair in which

the bird for a time may be able to elude you completely. But at last, after much patient work, you will have the game just where you want it. You can name the bird, you know its habits, all about its mating and nesting, the size and color of its eggs, where it builds and what it eats. You have tried to catch the meaning of its various calls and songs with fair success. Its form and color are indelibly fixed in the mind and the bird has almost become to you a veritable possession.

The work undertaken has been accomplished; yet, notwithstanding all this, a new field of labor of large proportions opens before you. The many evidences of intelligence and reason will now occupy your mind. The results of previous study must become manifest. The real harvest period has arrived, and it ought to be fruitful.

After having made the acquaintance of our Winter birds, the Spring migrations will be looked for with considerable pleasure.

The Crow will probably show the first indications of discontent. Having made some observations during the past season (1882) on the mooted question as to the migrations of Crows, I propose in the next article to give facts and figures bearing on this point.—*G. R. C., Norwich, Ct.*

Long-billed Marsh Wren.

“There is much in a name,” and if we judge in this instance by the length, we might expect to see an enormous bird like the fabulous “Roc,” and were it not for our dislike of change of names and trouble in definitions, we would suggest an exchange. But what these little visitors lack in size they make up in numbers. They come late in April or in the early part of May and spread over the salt marshes from Florida to Massachusetts; and on the Jersey coast one could count hundreds of nests in an afternoon. Their song is not sweet, for they utter a harsh cry, compared

by some to the noise of some large insect, like the cricket or katy-did. They are active and full of alarms, and the word that enemies are at hand passes along the line with great rapidity, so that it seldom happens that they are surprised in their nests, although they are impervious to the light. Sentinels are ever on guard. Late in April, or early in May, the flight of the pigmies commence, and they scatter along the creeks and speedily take possession of any bush or bunch of reeds or grass upon the meadows, from twenty to fifty feet apart, and commence to make a round or globular nest, about the size and shape of a cocoon, a foot or two above the ground, weaving in the long grasses in a very weaver-like manner around the standing reeds, and occasionally stopping up the interstices with mud.

The interior is lined with finer grass, feathers, or other soft substances. The opening is not visible but is concealed so nicely with grass that even a mosquito could not find its way in. The Marsh Wren, like others of the Wren family, from Sir Christopher down, have been famous as architects, and we have no nests in our collection more admired, or that show more skill than those of the Marsh Wren, woven in a group of cat-tails. I am informed that an occasional nest is found in the overhanging branches of trees, but have never met with such. Their second nests are built among the full-grown reeds, and a nest with a few cat-tails woven in and standing out from the top is quite a curious affair. The eggs are very small, pretty uniform in size and shape, but varying much in color, from a blueish white ground to a dark chocolate color, and more or less blotched. The eggs in one nest are generally nearly alike in color, although we occasionally find some very dissimilar in the same nest. The number varies from four to six. In hundreds of nests I have never found the latter number exceeded, averaging five.

The birds themselves are brown and white, of various shadings, and their little short tails are raised over their backs. Sometimes old nests are found occupied, but not often. They make two nests in a season. Their food consists of insects, or their chrysalis, &c., and locating as they do where the mosquitoes sometimes number 100 to the square inch, they would have no trouble in filling their crops, provided such food was desired. They do use the mosquito before its change from its chrysalis, as these are found in their stomachs. They care little for the birds of prey after the reeds have grown, as they can escape among them where the large birds cannot follow. But early in the season many fall victims to their pursuers. Were it not for this, the increase would be more than could be accommodated, even on these vast meadows. Being too insignificant to shoot, and their plumage not brilliant enough for ladies' bonnets, &c., they escape the guns of the boys. I have known a collector to obtain 400 to 500 eggs in a day, and have myself added several hundred to the stock of eggs for exchange, thus reducing the valuation of Wrens' eggs; yet I see no diminution in the numbers of the birds in the same locality. But their sharp little voices sound harshly in my ears when I think how many pairs of birds I have rendered miserable in my efforts to build up a collection of eggs.—*B. B. Haines, Elizabeth, N. J.*

CROSSBILLS.—The article on Crossbills, in "Vol. VI. No. 3," reminds me of an incident occurring three years ago during a trip to Tennessee. I was hunting for specimens on a clearing near Rugby, in the eastern part of the State, when a bird was startled and flew to a wall a rod or two off. My eye was no sooner focused, as it were, on him, than he dropped on the opposite side of the wall; but on my running up, he was *non est*. The three or four seconds I saw him were sufficient to distinguish the outlines of a Crossbill; but

the place and season (August) were more powerful an argument than my momentary glance, and I passed on, thinking I was deceived by the quickness of the occurrence. A day or two later I was surprised, on visiting the same place, by procuring three veritable Red-winged Crossbills from a flock of five—two adults, one immature. Two weeks after, while deer-hunting fourteen miles from the former place, I saw another, but only having a rifle, it was not taken. Several days after this I killed two more, four miles from the first place. My last specimen was taken a mile from the last locality. The habits of my birds seemed to differ essentially from others of this erratic species. The country was covered with oak forests; the birds, keeping near the extremities of broken limbs, exploring the holes and crevices, pulling away the decayed wood, and devouring the insects contained therein. My last specimen was shot from the roof of a log-house stable. The workmen said the birds were often seen thereabouts, and fed on the manure incident to the locality.

Mr. Allen kindly compared my birds with a large series of northern and Mexican types, and considers them an intermediate variety, as regards the formation of their feet and bills. My adults were all much redder than the Mexican variety. From the diversity of the locations, testimony of the natives, the plumage of the birds and the season of the year, it is to be inferred that the occurrence was not accidental and that they bred in Tennessee. Sorry I am unable to give complete details, as my note-book and the skins are with my collection in Boston.—*G. S. Smith, London, Canada.*

VIRGINIA RAIL.—Harry F. Haines of Elizabeth, N. J., found a nest of V. R. on the Elizabeth salt meadows containing eight eggs. Haines is the king bee on Rails' eggs (having secured 1,000 in one season) and Long-billed Marsh Wrens, which he seems to find without limit.

NOTES FROM HARTFORD.—February 4, saw a Winter Wren in a dooryard in the suburbs. A Song Sparrow has visited my dooryard at intervals during the Winter in company with Tree Sparrows and Snow-birds, feeding on crumbs with which they were supplied. Also saw one February 22d, on bank of Connecticut River, finding shelter among nooks and crevices. One Red-headed Woodpecker has remained all Winter in a large oak in an open lot, where I have seen it come out of a hole in a dead limb and make dashes out into the air in manner of Flycatchers, and returning, alight on the slender twigs of the outermost branches, swinging head downwards, uttering its harsh notes. Bluebirds observed on February 22d. March 5, Crow-blackbirds and Red-wings; also Meadow Larks. March 1st, Golden-winged Woodpeckers were seen. March 10th, heard first Robin.—*Harry T. Gates.*

EGGS IN A SET.—In answer to note in last number of O. and O. by W. W. W., of Shelter Island, as to Catbirds laying five eggs, I have known of several nests with that number in them, one found this year at Peace Dale, R. I., another in vicinity of Saratoga, N. Y., taken by G. C. Rich, and in my collection. This last was found several years ago. I found a Robin's nest built on ground or edge of rock in this place, and since I reported my nest of seven eggs. A collector found one of six and several of five at Peace Dale, R. I. The nest of six was brought me, but none of the five sets, as my friend was not aware they were uncommon. After taking the six eggs the bird layed two more and then deserted nest. I had a set of Savannah Sparrows brought me, collected by my brother from a hole in an apple tree, the bird caught on the nest. One of my collectors also found a set of Song Sparrows in a similar position. As for House Sparrows, there is no accounting for the places they choose or number of

eggs laid. A pair took possession this season of a hole where a Downy Woodpecker had a nest last year and have raised a brood there.—*Snowdon Howland.*

Notes from Galesburg, Ill.

March 23.—Nest of the Great Horned Owl in which was a newly fledged young; also parts of two Rabbits, several Field Mice and some Moles. The nest had been occupied previous seasons by Red-tailed Hawks, and was in a large white oak.

April 19.—Saw a Loggerhead Shrike impale a young Shore Lark on a thorn. The Shrike was followed by the old Lark.

May 23—Ground Robin's nest three feet up in a hedge. Contents, three young and an addled egg.

A Loggerhead Shrike came within ten feet of where I was standing, seized a Henslow's Sparrow and bore it off.

May 25—Nest of the Yellow-winged Sparrow, Field Plover, Downy and Red-headed Woodpecker, Bank Swallow, Black-throated Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Meadow Lark, all with full complements of eggs.

June 30.—Nest of *Passerina cyanea* with three eggs of the Cow-bird and none of the Indigo bird. A fourth egg of the Cow Bunting was lying on the ground nearly underneath the nest, and was uninjured. An egg of the Indigo Bird was found on the ground twelve feet from the nest. The eggs in the nest were partly incubated.

July 1. — Found a nest of Traill's Flycatcher containing seven eggs. It was concealed among the thick foliage of an apple tree, which showed no traces of previous climbing. The eggs have evidently been laid by two birds, as four of them are of a light ground color and quite globular, while the others are darker, more oblong and heavily spotted. Of twenty nests of this bird taken this season, thirteen have contained four eggs.—*C. W. Strumberg.*

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June 12th, found nest of GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) in an apple tree, about twenty feet from the ground. He took from it two eggs, which I told him was wrong, as he should have waited for the full set. On the 15th, while passing the tree, he saw the Heron on the nest again, and on examination found a new egg therein, which, on descending, was shook out and broken. On the 23d I sent him out again and he took three more eggs, one of which showed signs of incubation. Thus the birds were forced to lay a larger number than usual, and under peculiar circumstances, I think. About the same time a boy found another nest with five eggs in it, but this being situated upon an island, in a thorn tree, the water surrounding it too high by rains, and the cold weather here prevented our getting this set.

YELLOW-BREADED CHATS, (*Icteria virens*,) I found quite numerous, especially on a place of about fifteen acres, where the timber had previously been cut down and the stumps had been putting forth new bushes from five to fifteen feet high; in these I found at least thirty good nests.

AMERICAN REDSTART, (*Setophaga ruticilla*,) also nested quite plentifully here last season. One of the loveliest nests I took in May, 1881, with a set of four eggs: it was built in an oak sapling, at a height level with the eyes; it separated into three equal branches, the nest cavity in the centre. One might stand a foot distant and see nothing but a swelling, seemingly caused by the branches: so neat, compact

and in mimicry to the tree trunk is the structure built.

WOOD THRUSHES, (*Hylocichla mustelina*.) The creek timbers all about here are full of them, and the Cow-bird, (*Molothrus ater*,) seems to find this nest particularly convenient, for almost every other nest has this parasitic egg among the rightful owner's, and in some instances two and more. My friend, Dr. Matthews, a great lover of Oology, now in Kansas, and myself found a nest in the Vermillion river timber, near Pontiac, containing three of the Blue Thrushes and three (each differently marked) Cow-bird's eggs. The color, contrast and the nicety with which they had been placed in the nest, half to half, was strikingly wonderful.

CAT BIRD, (*Galeoscoptes carolinensis*,) very plentiful here, and I only mention them as we have found a number of nests with five eggs in them.

TOWHEE BUNTING, (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*,) was also nesting in numbers here. The first nests found were invariably on the ground, but the high water overflowing the timber lands last Spring, caused a second later brood, which we found in numbers in bushes from two to eight feet from the ground.

PRAIRIE WARBLER, (*Dendroica discolor*,) also nesting here in abundance.

ORCHARD AND BALTIMORE ORIOLES, (*Icterus spurius* and *I. galbula*.) We found several nests, one of the former having been destroyed by accident when with but two eggs; the birds commenced rebuilding immediately in the same tree, and, as I was told afterwards, raised their brood.

INDIGO BUNTING, (*Passerina cyanea*), also numerous here, and nests can be found throughout the hazel thickets.

MOCKING BIRDS, (*Mimus polyglottus*), have built herefor several years, and, though scarce, are increasing every season.

CARDINAL GROSBEEK, (*Cardinalis virginianus*.) I have never heard of any ever found here until I found a nest with four eggs in a thorn tree, about eighteen feet high, and, later, one with young fifteen miles south of the former.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEEK, (*Zamelodia ludoviciana*.) Several nests found here last season never seen here before, though the timber was well explored.

RED-EYED AND WHITE-EYED VIREO, (*Vireosylvia olivacea* and *Vireo noveboracensis*), were scarce here last season compared with the previous year.

WOOD PEWEE (*Contopus virens*), also plentiful in not too dense timber of medium sized trees, especially oaks. I seldom find one nest without more near by.

SCARLET Tanager, (*Pyrranga rubra*.) Although we see this bird here every Spring, few remain during the Summer, and only two nests were found in 1881, but with the most diligent searching by several others for me, and seeing a pair of these birds often in the woods, they could not be traced to their nests.

CEDAR BIRD, (*Ampelis cedrorum*.) A lady sent me a Wax-wing, found dead on the sidewalk after a fierce storm. It was uninjured, made a fine specimen, and on being dissected had a full-formed speckled egg inside. The shell was almost hard. On Aug. 12th, E. S. found a nest with four fresh eggs in an osage hedge row. We see flocks of these birds here every Spring for a little while, but have never found the nest before this year.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, (*Astragalinus tristis*), almost too numerous to mention but for a few facts. They love to build very near human habitations, and in the past five years I have not found over one or

two instances throughout the season that they did not build a short distance from a building of some kind; also, I found eggs very seldom before the middle of July, but more often after the middle of August, and I have seen the young birds follow their parents during quite cold weather, late in October, but there is only one brood here. The call of the young to their parents, even when flying, can never be mistaken by an experienced ear. According to some other writers they raise two broods, and much earlier than they do here (?) I have raised these birds formerly for cage birds, with very little trouble, becoming very tame, and on one occasion worthy of mention, I reared a nest of five, two of which had a bright yellow crown on their heads, size and shape of the black top of the male in its Summer livery. The rest were of the usual type, and I regret to say, that just as they were about to leave the nest, some one fed them their last dose; and I regret also that I did not know enough of taxidermy then.

In reference to the notes of birds expressed in print, I corroborate exactly with Mr. Chamberlain in December number of O. and O.

I never could get any satisfaction in comparing the true notes of birds with syllables in print.

I will give more notes of other birds, etc., in some future number of O. and O.
—A. H. Mundt, Fairbury, Ill.

Cardinal Grosbeak.

A common resident and one much more noticeable in Winter than at other times. Most of them appear to remain mated throughout the year, for I have very seldom seen an old male without a female near by, and never two males together unless they were fighting. Parties of three or four young are often found together in Fall and Winter. In the breeding season they have a decided preference for low, damp thickets, and, of a dozen nests, all

were found near streams. The most of these nests were in low Cedars, but two were in tangled grapevines; one in an alder directly over a small stream, about four feet from the water; one in a Wild Rose. Five is the largest number of eggs to a set I have ever seen; but I think three is the usual set in this locality at least. Two of the nests had only two eggs each, which was the full set, as incubation was far advanced. They are among our latest breeders, first sets being found about the first of June, and one set of three was found August 7th; incubated about one week. In a set of five which I emptied for a friend was a "runt egg." I did not have time to measure them, but the "runt" was less than one-third smaller than the rest, and contained a well formed embryo of the same proportionate size as the others. Could this have ever grown to a strong, full-sized bird? I think, however, he would have made way for the "survival" of his "fitter" brothers. I know of no eggs that show as much variation in size and markings as the eggs of the "Red-bird." I have a set of three, two of which are so thickly marked with lilac, slate and brown as to cover almost entirely the ground; the third is grayish white, simply flecked with spots of reddish brown and very bright lilac; others are marked with light reddish and faint lilac, exactly like those of the Tufted Titmouse, and these are generally the smallest eggs I have noticed, while the larger have darker markings. Others still, look just like White-rumped Shrikes' eggs, and I have one set which can scarcely be distinguished from some Cowbirds' eggs. The strength of this bird's bill is remarkable. They can easily crush a grain of the hardest of yellow corn, and this is no small job even for a good set of teeth. This grain is a favorite food with them, but when they can get it readily they only bite out the germ. The females of this species sing almost as much as the males, though their song is not so rich or

as loud as that of the male. If the song of any bird *could* be tiresome or monotonous to me, I think it would be this one. It is an endless repetition of two whistles like "White-Oak," repeated six or seven times, and then the same two whistles reversed in order, as "Oak-White" repeated about the same number of times. This is all of it, but it is such a rich, clear, flute-like tone, that it would more than make up for even a greater lack of variety than there is. This song is the favorite one of the Mocking Bird, and is repeated by it hour after hour. The Redbird has also other notes, which it uses very sparingly, however. It is a soft warble, and can only be heard when very near the bird. But this is far sweeter to me than its louder song. The sharp "chink" is easily imitated and I have called them with it up to almost arm's length, by keeping perfectly still, but at the first wink they were off.—*Edgar A. Small, Hagerstown, Md.*

CROW AND SNAKE.—While riding down through Occum, Conn., on May 26th last, we noticed a crow on a level garden bed killing a snake, which was not less than eighteen inches long. The snake seemed fully conscious of what was going on and tried to get away, but showed fight every time it was seized. It was interesting to see the crow bite him, lift him up and throw him to the ground, keeping one eye on us the while. This went on for some time, the snake getting weaker every bout. The crow evidently not liking the nearness of myself and carriage, seized the snake within a few inches of its head and flew with it into the large trees beyond the Wequonock River where we could not watch its further operations. The snake hung down its full length while being carried over the river. Crows are great scavengers, especially while they have young in the nest, and during this time they will carry off more very young chickens than any Hawk in North America.

The Humane Side.

We make the following extract from a private letter received from a valued lady friend. A lady who knows more about the Immortal Wilson than any person living. The father of this lady was the engraver of Wilson's plates as well as those of Bonaparte's continuation. It is not likely that such engraving on copper will ever again be attempted. But to our extract:

"I was very much pleased with an article in the O. and O. in which the writer recommends the use of a field glass for the purpose of watching the habits of birds. It showed a true humanity. I cannot think we have a right, because we have the power, to destroy life or happiness. It has struck me as the pertinacious robbery of the nests of birds for their eggs, that is driving a great many useful as well as beautiful birds away from their natural haunts. We all know that birds are very useful in destroying insects injurious to trees and vegetation generally, and all the good they do none of us can know. I notice from your Journal that in many places where certain birds were once numerous they have become very rare. Common observation teaches us that neither bird or animal will return or remain where they are subject to continual persecution. I cannot see any good it can do to science; and if it is for the mere love of gain, it is petty larceny in its meanest form.

In an account I read some time ago of the increase of grasshoppers and other insects destructive to vegetation in the West, it was attributed, and I believe justly, to the wholesale destruction of the wild Turkey and Grouse. It is a curious thing that the silly vanity of women is causing the destruction of so many beautiful birds. Many species of Humming Birds are becoming almost extinct, the prices paid for them making it an inducement for their destruction. I suppose, however, these things are no business of mine, but I always pitied

suffering, and as I grow older and nearer the grave it seems to me that cruelty is so unnecessary."

Blue Yellow-backed Warbler's Nest.

Some time ago Mr. Twogood of Putnam, Conn., presented us with the nest of a Blue Yellow-backed Warbler that is very unusual in shape, and the finding of it was so peculiar that we think it best to place it on record. It will be noticed that Mr. Twogood was not acquainted with the bird or its habits, but found the nest from the vibration alone of the hanging moss, which must have been caused by the pulse of the bird. When we received the nest we placed it in warm water to get it back to its natural shape. After it was dry we measured it very carefully and found it twenty-two and a half inches long; and what was still more strange there were two perfect nests, one above the other. The one described below was the bottom nest. The one above had undoubtedly been used the year previous, but both nests are still perfect. But we will let Mr. T. tell his own story.

"I was returning home from a day's ramble down the Quinebaug River and noticed, while passing a Pine tree, several long pieces of "hanging moss" growing from the horizontal limbs. I noticed one piece in particular swaying to and fro while the rest were quite motionless, and I threw a stick at the swaying moss, when out flew a small bird which dropped instantly to the low bushes which covered the ground on the river bank. I did not see the bird again as she would not fly from the bushes. I climbed the tree but could not see into the moss, so I pulled it down and found it was a bird's nest. The limb from which I took the nest was about fifteen feet from the ground. The nest is a single piece of moss twenty inches long and about two and a half wide in the widest part. The entrance to the nest is eight inches from the top and two inches in depth. The eggs, four in number, were so far advanced

in incubation that I only saved one. The only lining the nest had was two or three horse hairs." Mr. T. only measured the body of the moss and not the lower portion.

During the season of 1881 Mr. Junius A. Brand of Norwich, Conn., took us to a colony of Blue Yellow-backs. One of the nests to which Mr. B. climbed contained one of the old birds an unwilling prisoner, as by some means it had become entangled in the moss and could not escape until aided by Mr. B. There were no eggs in the nest. In this small colony of a few trees we found some five or six nests beside some old ones of the year previous.

Eggs in a Set.

In May, 1880, I took a set of six robins' eggs, and in July, 1881, a set of eight with this peculiar history: Late in June I discovered a pair of robins building in a small plum tree in the yard. I visited the nest daily when completed, and at noon of the day the fourth egg was laid, I took the set of four. Imagine my surprise in going out the next morning to find the nest gone from the plum tree and at seeing it nicely settled in the crotch of a young maple, the next tree to the plum, with the female upon the nest. This was about 9 a. m. About 5 p. m. I visited the nest and found one egg, to which three more were added in the next three consecutive days. The sixth day I took the four, making my set of eight. Queries: How did those birds remove that nest intact? as they must have done, and would the female have laid the eight eggs had I not taken the first four from the nest? I think she would as they were laid in eight consecutive days. I have also caused a robin to lay eight eggs by removing one egg daily. There were three eggs when I first discovered the nest.

A young collector here has taken three sets of five and four of four Rose-breasted Grosbeak's eggs this last season. I had always supposed four was the average

number until I saw your article in June number giving three as the average.

That "prolific sparrow" of one of your correspondents reminded me of a Phoebe that I thought was quite prolific; still do not know as it was unusual. May 14th, 1881, I took a set of five. May 21st, (just one week) seeing the bird on the nest, I visited it and secured a second set of five. May 28th, (just one week later) still seeing the birds around and on the nest again, visited it and found a set of four. I had not the heart to again rob her.

Will some one please tell me the average number of eggs laid by the Green Heron and give me descriptions, measurements, etc., of the eggs of the Clapper, Virginia and Carolina Rails.—*M. Day Murphey, Jr., Cortland, N. Y.*

CORRECTIONS.—Washington, D. C., Dec. 30, 1882, Dear Mr. Wade.—In "Notes from Colorado" in the December number of O. and O., which I have read with much interest, are some points to which I should like to call your attention. When speaking of nest and eggs of the Mountain Mocking Bird, Mr. Stone evidently means Townsend's Solitaire, (*Myiadestes townsendi*), which has nest and eggs exactly like those he describes. The Mountain Mocking Bird, (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), is a bird of the sage-brush plains and mesas exclusively; makes its nest in "sage" (i. e. *Artemisia tridentata*) bushes, and lays eggs of a bright bluish green color, spotted with clove-brown. His "Oregon? Snowbirds" are probably *Junco caniceps*, (Gray-headed Snowbird); his "Steller's Jay" is the Long-crested, and "Canada Jay" is the White-headed Jay, (*Perisoreus capitalis*.) I make these corrections with no intention of criticising your friend Stone, but rather for his information, since he probably is without books to aid him in his identifications. Very respectfully, yours,—*Robert Ridgway.*

Ask your friends to subscribe.

Brief Newsy Notes.

BOB-O-LINKS.—Farmers informed J. M. W. that Bob-o-links did not put in an appearance until May 17th, near Norwich, Conn., last year, and but few then.

BOB-O-LINKS.—In our long rides the past Spring we did not see ten specimens. Last Fall we clipped a piece from a Philadelphia paper apparently written by some Bohemian more careful than the rest. After describing all the methods of taking them, and by whom he estimated the destruction of Reed Birds and Rail from Bombay Hook to the mouth of the Delaware River at 1,000,000 during the month of September alone, and the number of gunners increase each year, while of necessity the number of the Bobolinks are becoming reduced, and this destruction is on the first section of their flight alone, while they have to run the gauntlet from the Delaware to their extreme southern destination, through the Carolinas to the West Indies, as the "Rice" and "Butter Bird." On their return in the Spring the trapper lays in wait and takes large quantities with the net, for which they usually get about \$3. per dozen alive. It would seem as if the time was not far distant when our cheerful Bobolink would be a much rarer bird than at present, as no law can reach such wholesale destruction through so many different States.

GREAT-HORNED OWLS.—Have just had another Great-horned Owl brought in alive. Caught in a steel trap. He (or she) and my old bird take kindly to each other, and so you see I expect to be able to supply the trade with eggs the coming season, about the middle of February. Orders received; first come, first served—look lively—Dec. 25, 1882, W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn. Mr. Coe has had such remarkable luck that he can well afford to throw a joke at the rest of us. We hope they will lay in confinement and disappoint him.

THE TAXIDERMIST SHOW is postponed until May 4, to be held in New York city.

WHITE-WINGED COOT.—Fred. T. Jencks, Prov., R. I., reports a White-wing Coot, probably Albinistic.

OUR CHECK LIST INCOMPLETE.—It is announced that an Englishman has arrived in New York with twenty-eight Ostriches to be used in Ostrich Farming. As the addled eggs at least will be thrown upon the market it will be necessary to amend our check lists. If not, why not?

GOLDEN EAGLE.—Jos. Skirm, Jr., Santa Cruz, California, shot a Golden Eagle (Aug. 3, 1882,) which measured six feet from tip to tip of wings, length three feet, and weighed eleven pounds. It was feeding on a Ground squirrel. Mr. S. collected 1500 eggs the past season, and sold and exchanged nearly all before Sept. 1st.

WOOD THRUSH.—Is not four an unusually large set of Wood Thrush? During the past season I have found in all thirty-seven nests, and do not remember to have observed more than three, either eggs or young birds, in any nest. Also, what is the farthest Southern limit that the Wilson's Thrush breeds? I have not been able to find any nest in Chester County as yet.—*W. S. McDermond, West Chester, Pa.*

ORNITHOLOGICALLY.—Previous to November 25th were taken near here one Snowy Owl, one White-winged Crossbill, and a bird called by the taxidermist Little Auk. Probably he may be right but I can't say from my limited experience with seabirds.—*W. E. Saunders, Phila., Pa.*

BLACK SNOWBIRD.—*Junco hyemalis*—as a cage bird? Mr. A. B. Bailey of Cobalt, Conn., caught one some time last February, and it lived until the middle of August—said it would eat meal. He is at the Bank every few days and I enquire after the bird each time. Quite a long time for a bird to live here in a cage, as they breed so much farther North—*Jno. H. Sage, Portland Conn.*

CANADIAN TARIFF.—The writer in the November number, who criticised the Canadian book-tariff as applied to Coues' new Check List, overlooked the fact that while the Canadian duty on scientific books is fifteen per cent., the duty when the same books are imported into the United States is twenty-five per cent. He says "This is contrary to the British principles of free trade." Exactly so, and for that very reason it is in perfect accord with the Canadian principles of protection.—*W. E. Saunders, Philadelphia.*

CALIFORNIA QUAIL have been successfully introduced into Auckland. The Acclimatization Society furnished Mr. T. B. Hill with twelve brace, and when he put them down on to their future home they seemed to like the prospect amazingly, and being healthy and not suffering from their long journey, took to their legs and trotted away in good style. So says LAND AND WATER OF LONDON, England.

CHICKENS. I wrote you I had mounted a *black* chicken which had four legs. Well, that was before "election," when every one was a *black* Republican, but now then I am tonight presented with a pure *white* one (alive) with the same complement of legs, hatched since the "first Tuesday of November," showing that notwithstanding the great political "revolution," we ornithologists keep up with the times, even if it necessitates a change of *colors*.—*W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn.*

BOB-O-LINKS were common here during the past Summer and stayed later than usual. The last seen in the oat fields was August 30th. I saw but one in Kansas during a two weeks' stay; a male at Abilene, May 30, 1882. About thirty miles south of Chicago, on the W., St. L. & P. R. R., on June 6th, they were very abundant, and from some of the meadows the males started in large, loose flocks as the train passed. I think that there were at least twice as many in Northern Illinois as are found here.—*John M. Howey, Canandaigua.*

GREAT-HORNED OWL.—On a postal card before us Dr. Wm. Wood states that he once took five eggs from the nest of a G. H. O. Will the Dr. please give us the history of this find.

CHEWINK, COWBIRD AND WOOD THRUSH.—I noticed Dr. Atkins' note concerning the Cowbirds' eggs in the Wood Thrush's nest, and will say that I have collected at least three sets of Wood Thrush with Cowbirds' eggs. I have also notes of the finding of three Chewinks' nests which contained each two eggs of the Cowbirds. Never saw but one instance of their laying in the nest of the Cardinal Red-bird.—*W. T. Warwick*

LATE NESTING.—The latest nesting that has come under my observation was that of a common Dove, under date of Sept. 10, 1882. I examined the eggs, which appeared to be considerably incubated, but did not collect them. The farmer in whose orchard the nest was situated told me that a Red Squirrel had destroyed the half-fledged young of this bird several weeks before, which probably accounts for the lateness of this set.—*W. T. Warwick, Washington, Pa.*

CHAT'S NEST.—Oct. 12th, found at Noank an old Chat's nest in a sweet-brier bush, filled to the brim with leaves and debris, but from which eggs were protruding. Took a stick and poked out seven eggs, to wit, three Cowbirds' and four Chats, all with holes picked in them. Oct. 13th, Snow-birds common.—*J. M. W.*

OUR HOLIDAY BIRD.—The Bluebird may or may not be "poor," but as the old text quaintly has it he is "always with us." By the stern matter of record rigidly kept for twelve months, I find he is the only bird actually seen and noted, singly and in companies, on every one of our National and popular Holidays, as follows: New Year's, St. Valentine's, St. Patrick's, (Fish Hawk's Day,) All Fools, Fast Day, Decoration Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.—*J. M. W., Norwich, Conn.*

SAVANNAH SPARROW breeds commonly throughout Western New York. I saw many sets in Ward's Museum at Rochester, N. Y., taken in Monroe County, and I take a few sets here each year, though the nests are hard to find. They arrive the latter part of April (25th, 1881, 20th, 1882,) and depart about the middle of September, (Sept. 19, 1882.) In abundance they rank sixth among the Sparrows here, viz.: Grass Finch, Hair, Song, House, Swamp, and Savannah Sparrows.—*John M. Howey, Canandaigua, N. Y.*

LONG-BILLED MARSH WRENS.—Snowdon Howland, Newport, R. I., and Will. K. Ide, Evanston, Ill., both report seven eggs.

SNOWDON HOWLAND sends replies on "Wanted to Know." He says he has whistled in all the subscribers he can, and he has done well. Thinks the Orchard Oriole uses green material because it is easier to work. It is not because it is easier to work but because it can be worked without breaking. The nest could *not* be built from dry material. Straw braiders understand this fully and keep wetting the straw as they work.

SONG SPARROW.—July 2d, 1881, I secured a bulky nest of the Song Sparrow from a White Pine tree near our house with a set of five eggs. The nest was placed near the end of a limb ten feet eleven inches from the ground. July 6th I found the same pair had constructed another nest in the same tree, six inches higher than the first, and nearly as good, which contained one egg. On examining the nest again July 10th I found they had finished their second set of five eggs, which I did not disturb, thinking that they might build again the next year, but I looked in vain for them.—*S. T. Kimball, Ellington, Ct.*

GREAT NORTHERN SHRIKE.—Dec. 2d, I shot and mounted a (Great Northern) Shrike or Butcher Bird. This is the second specimen I ever heard of being seen or shot in this vicinity.—*S. T. Kimball, Ellington, Conn.*

RARE BOOKS.—In a recent letter from W. W. Sabin, 43 Wellington-street, Strand, London, he quotes a copy of Nuttall's Land and Water Birds, 2 vols, $\frac{1}{2}$ sheep, one volume stained, price £4, 4s.; the same in green crushed levant morocco, super extra gilt edges, £8, 8s, 6d.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS.—Thanksgiving Day there was a flock of about 100 White-winged Crossbills feeding on seeds of weeds in the fields that had been planted last year, and were so fearless that I could get quite near them. I took a few specimens of both sexes.—*E. E. Rogers, Y Rockport, Mass.*

SNOW BUNTINGS have been here more than a month and I have seen large numbers of Shore Larks. Several female Pine Grosbeaks have been seen, and one or two taken, but no males.—*E. E. Rogers, Rockport, Mass.*

BALD EAGLE.—On the third of November on coming to an opening in the woods not far from a mill pond, I saw a Bald-headed Eagle on the ground in a half lying position. My first impulse was to shoot, but as it did not move I lowered my gun and walked up to it and found it was half starved. I took it home and gave it good care but it died in a few days. He is in mature plumage, nicely mounted, and adorns my cabinet.—*Chas. E. Bellows, Bridgton, N. J.*

SNOWY OWL.—On Thursday, October 26, I took a very fine specimen of the Snowy Owl. I shot him on Jones Island, Cumberland County. This is the first specimen taken here in eight years, and I feel proud of it.—*Chas. E. Bellows.*

RARE BIRDS.—It will interest you to know that I have taken a pure white Rail, and still better a fine specimen of the Common Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). These are rare specimens here. I also have a Bald Headed Eagle I took from the nest some nine months ago, of which I will tell you all about in due time as I am observing his habits carefully.—*Chas. E. Bellows.*

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BOSTON, MARCH, 1883.

No. 3.

Among the Buteos.

The voices of our New England Buzards are again ringing through their old haunts, and it may now be reasonable to review my local notes on their breeding habits last Spring. In short, then, I took 104 eggs. And from other nests in my circle of observation were taken or destroyed by farmers, hawk-hunters and others, sixty more eggs and young birds. So until a more favored breeding range is made known I shall claim this to be the home of the Buteos. A correspondent in Rochester writes that he thinks as many eggs can be taken yearly in that vicinity, but until this is shown to be true I shall not believe the distribution of species is so equal. If this article could be accompanied by a good physical map of Norwich and its environs, it would help greatly to support my claims. An irregular line drawn around the city just outside the suburbs would pass through the breeding places of sixteen pairs of Red-shouldered Hawks which I marked down the second week in April. Except a few hemlocks, the groves and strips of first growth are all deciduous and nearly all nut-bearing. The red squirrel, which is not so relentlessly shot down as his gray cousin, is amazingly plenty in these suburban woods. While skating yesterday on Yantic cove, within the city limits, I saw seven squirrels playing in the small patch above Christ's church on the river bank. Every one who has climbed to nests of young Buteos nearly fledged, must have been astonished at the great quantity of these young

rodents, supplied by the parent birds. In one nest of Red-tailed Hawks I have seen portions of nine red squirrels, and from another have counted out on the ground seven entire bodies. A game bird or chicken now and then, but red squirrels for every day bill-of-fare. Mousing, Master Buteo will go. And frogging, too, for I have several times surprised him in muddy sloughs in the woods, and field collectors often are called to notice the black mud on fresh Hawk's eggs. Given then a great food supply and the species that follow it will be abundant. Over the grove of secong growths to the left of Love Lane, last Spring, I saw a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks hovering for days in succession. I knew they were not breeding in the patch, as they had not done so in former years, and there were but three old Crow's nests very low down. But to be very sure I examined the grove repeatedly with care and found it to be alive with red squirrels. In one apple-tree hole was a litter of six; in the butt of an oak were five with eyes unopened, and the conspicuous outside nests were many. A Barred Owl clung to the top of a white birch with one claw, and was tearing away at a squirrel's new domed nest with the other claw. The Hawks had their nest with two young in the swamp beyond, and this grove was their handy larder, and very noisy they were over their daily grace before meat.

The Buteos' nests from which my '82 series was taken, were for the most part old ones, the very few exceptions being smaller than those used for several seasons. The use of an old nest by the

Great-horned Owl is habitual. The Barred Owl takes a hole when it can find one, and if not, an old nest. Failing there, he builds a very small nest of the flimsiest sort. To show the dislike of our Raptores to nidification, let me reproduce an avian drama to which usher nature gave me a free pass and open stall last Spring. The scene opens late in March on Plain Hill, where a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks were refurbishing up the nest in which off and on they had bred for five years. Their dalliance was pleasant, no doubt, but dangerously long, for a Barred Owl slipped in and laid two eggs April 1 and 3. The Hawks were virtually indignant, and were often seen to dash down towards the nest, as if to dispossess the intruder, but they always wisely stopped a few inches above the snapping bill and mass of fluffy feathers with nine points of law in its favor. The Hawks at length went across a small swamp and re-upholstered the nest in which the Owl bred in '81. I now took the two Owl's eggs, supposing the clutch complete, but she then went across the swamp and laid the third egg in her old tenement. When I climbed to the second nest, with the Hawks in possession, it contained three Buteo's eggs and one Barred Owl's. Blowing showed that the Owl's egg was slightly incubated, and it would have been interesting perhaps to have let nature had her course with this motley clutch. The unwearied owl now went back to the first nest and laid and hatched her second clutch of two eggs. Ovipositing after a while again becoming a necessity for the Hawks, they too repaired to the opening scene of our drama from high life, and after a few noisy demonstrations against the Owl, took up their new quarters in a tree within gunshot of the first. The nest was so small I could not believe that even our smallest Buteo (*pennsylvanicus*), could breed in it, though I saw the great female Red-shouldered come from it, and could see that it was feathered

through my field glass. Climbing showed it to have a very large and bright initial egg, which was riddled with shot the next day by so-called hawk-hunters. The marauders completed the series of reprisals by carrying away my young owls.

Aside from my first object, I have dwelt on the final details of this little tragedy, because it also is a fair illustration of the domestic troubles of the Rapaciæ here in the breeding season. With every man's hand against them—hunter, farmer and collector—it is a continued source of wonder that so many eggs, are taken and so many hawks left. Some may be alien birds drawn by the food supply. But as a solution to this question it is not unreasonable to suppose that later in the season when the farmers are busy with field work and the collector is eagerly following the small birds in their Summer homes in the outskirts of the woods, that made wary by pursuit, and screened by the dense foliage, the resident Buteos manage to "steal" an occasional nest and bring up enough young to keep up the old local race. This idea is in part born out by the fact that in my Winter tramps through our leafless woods, I now and then run across a Hawk's nest which I knew was not there the year before and the first chapter of whose life history had not been revealed to me.—*J. M. W., Norwich, Conn.*

Notes from Nebraska.

April 21, '82, found my first nest of the American Long Eared Owl. 'Twas in the forks of a small white oak tree fifteen feet from the ground and contained five eggs ready to hatch. It resembled that of the Common Crow, only smaller. While I was examining this nest the old birds showed their displeasure by flying and darting close to me, continually snapping the bill.

At times they would alight upon the ground and with spread wings and tail flutter around, doubtless for the purpose of alluring the intruder from their nest.

The same day I found the nest of a Black Cap Chickadee containing six fresh eggs.

April 23d I found the nest of a Screech Owl in a hollow oak tree twenty inches below the opening. It contained three fresh eggs. From this same tree during the Winter of 1881 and '82 I captured five fine specimens of this owl.

May 1st I took another set of eggs of the American Long-eared Owl. This, like the former, contained five eggs and they were incubated about two weeks. Another nest was found on May 4th with five eggs almost hatched.

May 6th I discovered the nest of a Red-tailed Hawk in a Red Elm tree fifty-eight feet from the ground. After a very hard climb I found the nest contained four (?) young about two weeks old. On the 13th of May I found two more nests of this hawk, both of which contained eggs; one two, and the other three.

May 18th I was informed by a herder or "Cow Boy" that he had found a burrow on the prairie inhabited by a Burrowing Owl. The next evening armed with a spade we repaired to the place and after digging six feet we came upon the nest. It was about two feet under the ground and contained nine young of various sizes, and two eggs, one of which was pecked. The burrow was evidently made by some burrowing animal, probably a skunk.

COOPER'S HAWK.—The following is the date of different nests found this year: May 11th, one nest containing four fresh eggs. May 15th, one containing four and another containing five eggs, all of which were fresh. May 17th, two more nests containing five eggs each. These were slightly incubated. May 11th I received a full set of eggs of the Marsh Harrier, five in number. The nest was placed on the ground in the prairie grass. Two more nests were found, May 18th, containing respectively five and six eggs. These last were slightly incubated. May 17th I also found a nest of the Short-eared Owl. It was on the

ground in the prairie grass and contained eight beautiful white eggs. A good Pointer dog is invaluable to any one collecting eggs here, as these Owls and Hawks give chase whenever he comes near their nest. The dog will come very handy also to find the nests of Prairie Hens, Plover, Larks, &c.—*H. A. Kline, Polo, Ill.*

The Prothonotary Warbler.

This beautiful little *Protonotaria citrea* is quite rare in Kansas, yet I had the good fortune to find four nests last June.

Early in May I saw a Downy Woodpecker making an excavation in the dead limb of a small elm tree standing on the edge of a forest and on the bank of the Big Blue River. I watched the tree for several days, but, for some cause, the birds abandoned the work.

On June 9, in passing this tree I saw a bird fly from the hole so swiftly that I could not determine the species. I hid in some bushes near by, and after waiting about ten minutes was rewarded by seeing a pair of the Prothonotary Warblers approach through the trees. They flew directly to the elm tree; and, after a moment's hesitation, the female entered the hole, while the male flew away into the forest.

I then crept silently to the nest, which was not more than six feet above the ground. By quickly placing my hand over the hole and allowing sufficient opening between my thumb and finger for the admission of the bird's head but not its body, I easily caught the bird and examined it at my leisure. I have frequently caught Woodpeckers, Bluebirds, Chickadees and Wrens in this manner.

When the bird was released it uttered a short, distinct call which brought the male bird promptly from the trees near by. They then flew away together.

Returning to the tree I secured the nest and complement of five fresh eggs.

This nest was composed of fine grapevine bark, dry weeds, and horse hair. The

structure was rather frail and deeply rounded. Around its upper edge were arched bits of skeleton oak leaves whose delicate lace-like tracery of veinlets gave evidence of greater taste than I had before seen in bird architecture.

The eggs were much rounded in shape. The color was white with a pinkish hue, and dotted with spots of brown and lavender. At the larger end these spots were so thick as to become confluent. The eggs were similar in size and markings.

Two more nests of this bird were reported to me on the same date, June 9. Upon visiting them I found in one five young nearly fledged, and in the other two addled eggs.

A week or more after the discovery of the first nest I found a pair of the birds not far from the same place. I watched them closely and afterward frequently saw the male alone, but failed to find the nest until after the young had left it, when I found it in the deserted nest of a Bluebird not a hundred feet away from a dwelling house.

I identified the nest by its peculiar architecture and a few egg shells at the base of the tree.

These four nests were alike in situation, all being in damp forests near the river, and in deserted nests of other birds, about six or seven feet above the ground. They were all built of like material and were ornamented with skeleton leaves. Two of the nests were in elm trees and two in willow stumps. I have read no description of the nest of this warbler and do not know whether the above agrees with the experience of older observers.—*D. E. Lantz, Manhattan, Kan.*

See pages 53 and 65, Volume vi, for other Notes.

STEAL OUR ARTICLES.—Oh, yes! keep on stealing them; never mind the credit. It's only an article.

Subscription price, \$1 per annum.

Wanted to Know.

Why and by whom Maryland was prefixed to "Maryland Yellow Throat," which a correspondent thinks should be named Maryland Black Eye.

Why, and how the "Purple Finch" received its name when it is not purple.

Why the "California Woodpecker" selects "sound acorns only to store away" when it lives on an insect diet. William Stenbeck suggests that the acorns rather contain the germ of the grub which develops while being in store.

Wanted to know more about the "Ash Throated Flycatcher" and "Feruginous Buz-zard." If Gentry has yet discovered that his statements of the Bluebird's migration are not true. The Hash diet he gives this bird is beyond the power of mortal man to say whether it is true or not, but the "Blythe and Bonny" Bluebird sings all the same, and is with us all the year, and does often lay six blue eggs and white ones not uncommon.

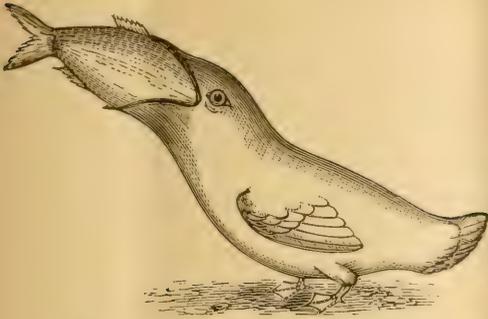
Notes from Manhattan, Kan.

Of five nests of the Ground Robin found by me last Spring only two were on the ground. One was six feet above ground in a greenbrier (*Smilax*.)

Last Spring the Harris Sparrow remained with us until the latter part of May. During May I found in nests of other birds several parasitic eggs which did not resemble those of the Cowbird in shape, size or color. They were much smaller, elongated in shape, and the markings were lighter. I found many Cowbirds' eggs later but none like these. The query presented itself whether the Harris Sparrow could have laid these.

OCT. 1, 1882.—Saw a Mourning Dove sitting on two eggs, apparently fresh.

DEC. 30.—Saw thousands of Bluebirds and Robins in the woods. Saw two Ground Robins, (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*.) — *D. E. Lantz.*



CLARK ON "GULL ISLAND."—This young Tern was about two-thirds grown, without feathers, only sprouting quills, and was covered with thick gray down, and the fish, a Herring, was fully as long as the bird, and very nearly as heavy, and was about half swallowed. They lay on the ground, the bird flat on its side, and I supposed it was dead, but lifting it up and removing the fish I found the bird was all right and ready for another. The head of the fish was partly digested. I would not suppose it possible for a Roseate Tern to have captured or carried to land so large a fish—much less such a little fellow attempt to deglutinate so immense a morsel proportionably. — *John N. Clark, Old Saybrook, Conn.*

NATURALIST MANUAL.—We have received from the author, Oliver Davie, of Columbus, Ohio, a small 8 vo. book of 125 pages with the above title. It is a compilation from the best sources, chiefly Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, and is intended for collectors of Birds, Nests and Eggs, with full instructions how to collect and how to preserve them. It is a most excellent plan partially carried out, being from *Turdidae* to *Tanagridae*. It is just the book for young ornithologists and those working in the field, and equally valuable as a book of reference for any devotee to the science. We hope Oliver will get encouragement enough to complete the work at no distant day.

We also received a fine cabinet photograph of two Golden Eagles, mounted by Mr. Davie.

Technical Matters.

Our ideas on technical terms are not well understood by some of our readers. We have the highest regard for advanced scientists and closet naturalists, but as scientists from education and force of habit write only in their technical language, which young naturalists cannot understand, we have considered it a duty to our young aspirants for ornithological knowledge to publish bird life in plain English, always giving scientific terms, but only once, after that the English name only. We are in perfect harmony with science. We are antagonistic to nothing that is honest in nature. We claim the right to express our views when ornithological trash is placed upon the market for our patrons to buy. We are antagonistic to no other publication. We claim the right to point out what we believe to be errors, wherever found. This is our platform and please remember it, and don't forget that our readers are hungry for every item of genuine news relating to the life history of our birds, which will be thankfully received; and whenever possible take the name, both English and scientific, direct from the check list. If any other list but the Smithsonian is used give the name, describe your observations carefully, always bearing in mind that too much dry science tends to rob a subject of its general interest.

"Birds of Ohio."

Our thanks are tendered to a friend who kindly remembered us with two copies of this work, which we have looked over as carefully as our limited time would admit. Our first search was for something new, but we found it not: we turned to the Snowy Owls, expecting that the author would either prove or disprove Audubon's story of shore birds at the Falls of the Ohio, or at least have something to say about it, but not a word. It would seem to us that the author did not read the ornithological literature of the day, did not

have any wide-awake correspondents in the field, and had but a limited library of reference. We are sorry that he has made such poor use of the State's money, and yet Doctor J. M. Wharton, the author, states that it has been six years in preparation. The time has been badly spent and he has lost a golden opportunity of doing a good work for the ornithologists of America.

“WOOD DUCKS.”—We have received an uncolored copy of Mr. Sheppard's “Wood Ducks,” which is a phototype by F. Gutekunst in the best style of the art, and is from a fine colored drawing by Mr. Sheppard, which we had the pleasure of seeing at the Academy of Natural Science. The Wood Ducks are a beautiful group and very life-like. Our readers will do well to secure a copy of this work at the low price at which uncolored copies are offered.

DOCTOR COUES SAID IT.—The *Nuttall Bulletin* for January opens with a very pretty gossip article by Dr. Coues, advertising the new edition of his “Key to North American Birds,” which is fast approaching completion. In this article the Dr. “suggests the propriety of calling a Congress of American Ornithologists to discuss, vote upon, and decide each case in which the Doctors disagree.” We have no room to discuss the question in this number, but simply for the present to place it on record, for it is a very important matter. The Doctor compliments the O. and O. through something with a fearful name. We hunted it up, and found it was a bird, and with a lovely English name. Why, Dr., how could you make such a mistake?

Ipswich Sparrows.

On Nov. 21, '82, I had occasion to go to Ram Island Beach. This is a wide sandy beach some fifty acres in extent, and covered with beach grass, and in some parts with bushes and small cedars. As I was about to leave I saw several sparrows fly up and alight on the cedars, and at the

first glance it struck me that they were Ipswich Sparrows, and as if to convince me a Song Sparrow flew up beside one of them, showing off the large size and pale tints of the former very markedly. Having no gun I reluctantly left, but returned in the afternoon, and after some hunting secured all three of them. Two of them measured $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length; the 3d 6 in. Since then I have searched the beach over carefully but found no more specimens of *Passerculus princeps*. Saw flocks of Lesser Redpolls on Dec. 5th and 6th.

PINE FINCHES were abundant here in the Fall. Mr. Worthington secured sixteen at one shot. Some small boys killed two.—*Moses B. Griffing, Shelter Island, N. Y.*

Capt. Chas. E. Bendire, U. S. A.

Under date of Dec. 29th we have a long letter from the Captain detailing many of the duties at his new post, which seems so far to quite fully occupy his time; so much so that what spare time he does get is entirely taken up collecting and making specimens, so that instead of writing notes for our readers, he is making them to be used in the future. We will make a few extracts from his letter such as will interest our readers generally: “However with all the drawbacks I am making some headway in my collection, and am getting some good things. I have now catalogued 375 skins since my arrival here, and 300 of these I have made since Sept 1st, besides a great many alcoholic specimens not counted in the above. We are having a mild Winter, the snow is only about a foot deep, when in other seasons it has been three feet deep at this time. Birds are scarce—about twenty species comprise the more common Winter residents. The water birds are too far off for me to trouble them much—the nearest point on the lake is ten miles. I had hoped to find some rare Winter birds and plenty of them as at Camp Harney in '75 and '76, but there are very few, and even Owls and Hawks

are not near as plenty about the post here as at Walla Walla. I presume the marshes near the lake are full of them, but they are almost impassible. When the lake and marsh freeze over I expect a lot of birds will be driven up toward the post, and by that time very likely there will be so much snow that I cannot get the birds."

It has been whispered among a few that Captain Bendire was to take up American Oology where the late Dr. Brewer left it, and it is to be earnestly hoped that this will be brought about at no distant day, for the department can well afford to do it as a very large edition would find a ready sale if it was found necessary to sell it, as the department now does the first volume, besides being one of the very few capable of undertaking this work. There was a warm friendship between him and the late Dr. Brewer that the death of the latter has not in the least diminished in the other. For the above reasons Captain Bendire is the one above all others to finish the work so well begun by his friend the late lamented Dr. Brewer.

Night Herons Breeding on the Marsh

While collecting on the marsh I noticed many Night Herons, and enquired of the hunters and trappers if they found any nests in the trees on the islands in the marsh, but they did not, but had found the nesting place on the marsh. I went for them with a boy for guide. We rowed up a channel as near the place as possible, when they began to leave their nests in the grass and rushes. When forty rods off we left the boat and waded. The bogs are a kind of floating sod, with two or three feet of mud and water under them, and sink at each step. The first nest was in the rushes and built of rushes, about one foot high and about the same width, with just hollow enough to keep the eggs from rolling out. Other nests were in the grass, but most of them were in the cat tail flags, in holes which had been burned

in the dry time. The nests in the flags were built of pieces of flags, both leaves and stalk. Those in the grass were built of rushes and flags. The nests contained from one to five eggs each, but mostly three—two sets of five and a number with four. I took about forty set that day—the larger sets were incubated, but about half were fresh. I went a second time to the marsh and got a lot of eggs.—*Delos Hatch, Oak Centre, Wis.*

Brief Newsy Notes.

BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER.—In Michigan, while camping about fifteen miles from Little Traverse Bay, I saw three specimens, but not having a gun I did not secure any.—*W. J. Simpson.*

LARGE SET OF EGGS.—April 29, '82, took a set of seven Bluebirds' eggs, and April 30 I took a set of six pure white eggs from Bluebirds of the natural color.—*W. J. Simpson, Ithica, N. Y.*

BARRED OWL.—A very fine specimen was brought me by a friend a few days ago, who, while driving along saw it perched on the fence. A club was thrown at it, but as it did not move my friend walked up to it and found it was blind. He lifted it into his sleigh and brought it in, when I found that the bird had had iritis, in which extreme adhesions had taken place, rendering the eyes almost wholly useless. The bird has a fine plumage although almost a skeleton.—*G. A. McCallum, Dunville, Ontario.*

Ornithological works, written by honest, conscientious men, never deteriorate in value, but advance to a premium as soon as the edition is exhausted.

BLUEBIRDS. As I am writing this 10 A. M. I think I hear a Bluebird, and on going to the window I see three sitting on the vane of the church across the street from the house. Now we can hardly put this down as the earliest arrival for '83, but it's certainly the latest for '82.—*W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn., Dec. 31, 1882.*

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—S. F. Rathbun, Auburn, N. Y., reports shooting a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Jan. 16.

RING-BILLED GULL.—April 29, '82, I shot a specimen of *Larus Delawarensis* at Rochester, N. Y. It proved to be an adult female; length 21.50 inches, extent 49.50.—*C. H. Wilder, Syracuse, N. Y.*

SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—July 12, '82. Saw a Sandpiper (probably the spotted) with something that looked like a minnow in its bill. Do they eat fish?—*C. H. Wilder, Syracuse, N. Y.*

KING FISHER shot at Portland, Conn., Jan. 14, in good plumage.—*W. W. Coe.*

OWLS.—Messrs. Southwick & Jencks report about 150 Owls this season—about seventy-five Barred Owls, and including all the varieties but Great Gray and Hawk Owls. Among them is a Sparrow Owl taken near Providence and nineteen Snowy Owls, one nearly white.

GOLDEN EAGLE.—A. D. Butterfield, San Jose, California, shot a young male Golden Eagle, Dec. 20, 1882, which measured 33 inches in length, 6 feet 5½ inches across the wings, 24 inch wing, 24 inch tail. A good skin was made from it.

PINE GROSBEAKS.—Saw six Pine Grosbeaks, Dec. 17. They were very tame—almost touched one with my hand—no old ones among them—these are the first specimens noted this season.—*John H. Sage.*

A SNOWY OWL was seen here on Sunday and followed across the river but not killed.—*John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.*

EGGS IN A SET.—May 30, '81, found set of five Catbird's eggs—nest in hazel bush. In West Newton, Mass., June 20, '81, found set of six Bluebirds in bird box. In Peotone, Ill., have found seven American Bittern; usual set three or four and sometimes five. Also a set of seven White-rumped Shrike; usual set five; have found six.—*D. H. Eaton, Woburn, Mass.*

ALBINO REDWING BLACKBIRD, (*Agelaius phoeniceus*).—From a flock of Redwing

"Starlings" I shot an Albino of a beautiful Golden Yellow except the wings which are white. The iris and tarsus were pink.—*Dr. F. W. Goding, Kaneville, Ill., September 1, 1881.*

CLAPPER RAILS' EGGS.—During the season of 1881 1,000 eggs were taken from a tract of land not two miles square, and yet not half was taken that could have been. These eggs were taken to sell for cooking purposes in New York market.

THE WORLD MOVES and so do some of our young men. SOUTHWICK & JENCKS are out with a new Checking List that leaves our's in the shade, and they are preparing a catalogue that will excel anything yet produced in that line. These two boys have got a collection together that is worth going a very long distance to see, only leave your wallet at home, and "Lead us not into temptation."

"Brown Creeper," *Certhia familiaris*,) winters in dense woods, but very rarely.—*A. Hall, East Rockport, Ohio.*

WILD GOOSE.—I saw a Wild Goose last night that was shot January 4 in the Middlefield Reservoir, two or three miles out of the City of Middletown. He had been seen in several places within a few miles of here all Winter. Could fly well enough and I could find no wounds on him except the fresh ones. "Every day brings something new."—*W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn.*

J. L. Goff writes that this Goose had been in the company of a flock of crows during the Winter.

ALBINO COWBIRD.—Aug. 11, 1881, while at Kaneville, Ill., I shot an Albino Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*.) It measured 7½ inches long and was of a creamy white color with the exception of the head and breast, which were a little more on the yellow tint. It was with a flock of Redwing Blackbirds. When I picked it up its eyes shone like fire. The iris was of a fire red. The pupil being pink the effect can be imagined. I could not discern the sex.—*Jos. L. Hancock, Chicago, Ill.*

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VOL. VIII.

BOSTON, APRIL, 1883.

No. 4.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

As you have so kindly consented to publish the notes and observations made by my fellow laborers, I send herewith a partial list of the stations and observers. It is expected that by your next issue the list will be complete and the rest of the names will then be forwarded. In giving the notes the endeavor will be to condense them as much as possible; for that reason in future in referring to the different stations and observers, the numbers as given below will be used.

For the benefit of those who are not already acquainted with the work, I will say that our aim is to study in concert and in a thorough and scientific manner the migration of birds in the Mississippi Valley, but the work will necessarily include a large amount of general study of their habits, food, etc. The chief merit claimed for the work is that it is carried on by many observers, all working together toward one common end, and hence each assisting the others to better and fuller results.

- No. 6, Texas, Waxahachie, S. W. FLORER.
- " 8, Georgia, Rising Fawn, J. T. PARKER.
- " 14, Mississippi, Oxford, Prof. R. B. FULTON.
- " 12, Mississippi, Jackson, A. G. GALE.
- " 13, Mississippi, Canton, T. S. WARD.
- " 15, Tennessee, Dyersburg, H. S. PELL.
- " 16, Tennessee, Duck River, J. B. CATHEY.
- " 17, Tennessee, Gardner, A. J. ROOKS.
- " 18, Tennessee, Southside, Dr. T. H. RYE.
- " 21, Kansas, Manhattan, D. E. LANTZ.
- " 22, Kansas, Manhattan, C. P. BLACHLY.
- " 24, Kentucky, Moolleyville, C. B. WIGHT.
- " 26, Arkansas, Fayetteville, Prof. F. L. HARVEY.
- " 29, Missouri, Kahoka, W. S. BAKER.
- " 30, Missouri, St. Louis, O. WIDMANN.
- " 31, Missouri, Glasgow, Prof. TROWBRIDGE.
- " 32, Missouri, Glasgow, T. B. SMITH.
- " 33, Missouri, Kansas City, G. E. STILLWELL.
- " 35, Illinois, Anna, C. W. BUTLER.

- No. 36, Illinois, Adin, W. D. HILLS.
- " 37, Illinois, Jacksonville, J. E. HOFMANN.
- " 38, Illinois, Liter, Dr. S. GRIFFIN.
- " 39, Illinois, Ellsworth, D. ARROWSMITH.
- " 40, Illinois, Osceola, Dr. E. O. BOARDMAN.
- " 41, Illinois, Polo, H. A. KLINE.
- " 43, Iowa, Grand View, W. A. LESTER.
- " 44, Iowa, Coralville, Mrs. V. S. WILLIAMS.
- " 45, Iowa, Wankon, E. M. HANCOCK.
- " 46, Iowa, Douglas, D. H. VERMILYA.
- " 47, Iowa, Mitchell, J. W. LINDLEY.
- " 51, Wisconsin, Racine, Dr. P. R. HOY.
- " 52, Wisconsin, Jefferson, W. W. COOKE.
- " 53, Wisconsin, West Depere, S. W. WILLARD.
- " 54, Wisconsin, Brookville, L. A. SMITH.
- " 57, Minnesota, Hastings, Rev. G. B. PRATT.
- " 58, Minnesota, Hutchinson, WM. TOMLINSON.
- " 60, Minnesota, Elk River, VERNON BAILEY.

It will thus be seen that the stations cover pretty thoroughly all the ground from the Gulf of Mexico to British America. There are, however, still some gaps which I should like to have filled. Nebraska and Indian Territory lack observers, and it is desirable to have more observers in each of the extreme Southern States. If any of the subscribers of the O. and O. would like to join in the work, drop me a postal and I will send circular of full instructions.

Among the reports sent in of Winter birds there are two which deserve special mention as showing the very unequal dispersion of birds. The first is from No. 30 and the other from No's 21 and 22. Here are two places in nearly the same latitude and about 400 miles apart. The records show that the temperature and weather of both were about the same; yet the bird life is very different. At both stations counts were made, so that we have an exact basis for comparison and are left to the vague terms numerous, common, scarce, &c. The dates are the same, being about

Jan. 1, 1883. Omitting the common resident birds we have the following differences:

ROBIN. (30) not seen. (21) in one day 2,000 individuals. "They have not been considered a Winter resident here, but there have been no seasons in which I could not find a few in sheltered localities during mild weather. This is the first season that I have seen them numerous. Wild grapes, berries, and hackberries are quite plentiful in the woods, and as they are favorite food of the robins it may account for their presence." A later letter, Feb. 5, says: "The robins still remain with us in spite of the severe weather of the last few weeks, but they are not so numerous as before the middle of January."

MOCKINGBIRD. (30) three birds seen. (21) and (22) none seen.

BLUEBIRD. (30) seen but no flocks, only single birds: 5 birds in 23 miles travel. (22) 20 birds in 1 mile. (21) 250 in two miles.

TUFTED TITMOUSE. (30) too numerous to be counted; generally in family groups of 6—8 birds and conspicuous in every grove. It is a true resident. (21) and (22) not seen.

BROWN CREEPER. (38) not seen. (21) one bird, Jan. 21.

CAROLINA WREN. (30) a true resident. In sunny days its call is often ringing through the wood. (21) and (22) not seen.

WINTER WREN. (30) not seen. (21) and (22) each 1 bird. Dec. 30.

YELLOW-RUMP WARBLER. (30) two flocks seen of respectively 10 and 22 birds. They were active and frolicking in spite of the frosty weather, going through the wood just as they do in Spring. (21) Jan. 5, three birds. (22) Jan. 4, 6 or 8.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE. (30) 2 birds, Dec. 30. (21) and (22) not seen.

PURPLE FINCH. (30) in 9 miles saw 30, most of them in brown dress, but a few with purple head and rump and even purple breast. (21) and (22) not seen.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. (30) a few each day, about 40 in 23 miles. (22) not seen. (21) 75 in 2 miles, 20 in 4 miles.

PINE GOLDFINCH. (30) not seen this Winter nor last. (22) 1 bird. (21) 6 in 4 miles.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR. (30) not seen. (22) 50 in 1 mile and (21) 100 in 2 miles.

HARRIS'S SPARROW. (30) not seen. (21) and (22) a few each day. 32 in 6 miles.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. (30) single birds only; 6 seen in 19 miles. (21) and (22) not seen.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. (30) in small flocks; 24 in 15 miles. Some with bright yellow, but the majority in very plain dress. (21) and (22) not seen.

TREE SPARROW. (30) this species holds the second place in regard to numerical strength of our Winter visitants; 150 in 27 miles. (21) 200 in 4 miles. (22) 25 in 1 mile. (21) 100 in 2 miles.

BLACK SNOWBIRD. (30) met with everywhere; most numerous of the Winter visitants; 500 in 27 miles. (21) 50 in 4 miles. (22) 30 in 1 mile.

SONG SPARROW. (30) not many, but certain to find a few along the banks of creeks; 12 in 1 mile. (21) and (22) not seen.

TOWHEE BUNTING CHEWINK. (30) 3 birds seen Dec 30. (21) and (22) each 2 birds, same day.

CARDINAL GROSBEAK. (30) seen every day, singly or in pairs. (21) 150 in 4 miles; 200 in 2 miles. (22) 30 in 1 mile.

RUSTY GRACKLE. (30) a flock of about 30 resting on a high tree near the border of a wood. Dec. 28. Not usually found here in Winter. (21) and (22) not seen.

CROW. (30) thousands roost every night in the willows on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. During the day they disperse over an immense district, some going even 20 miles away. But all return in the afternoon. (21) 10 in 4 miles; 1 in 2 miles. (22) 6 in 1 mile.

SHORE LARK. (30) 9 in 6 miles. (21) and (22) 50 in 4 miles.

REDHEADED WOODPECKER. (30) two single birds and a pair seen in a week. (21) and (22) not seen.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER. (30) none seen. (21) 8 in 4 miles.

YELLOW-BELLIED WOODPECKER. (30) one seen Dec. 28. (22) 1 captured Nov. 30.

YELLOW SHAFTED FLICKER. (30) two seen in a week. (22) 8 in 1 mile (21) 6 in 4 miles.

HYBRID FLICKER. (30) not seen. (22) 1 in 1 mile. (21) 1 in 4 miles, and Dec. 30, 25 in 2 miles.

KINGFISHER. (30) not seen. (21) one seen.

MOURNING DOVE. (30) not seen. (22) 1 seen. (21) 30 to 40 in 4 miles.

It will thus be seen that the number of species is about the same but the kind of species quite different. Those of (21) and (22) lean toward the prairie birds, while (30) found the birds which prefer timber. The great difference in the number of individuals at the two places is probably due largely to the fact that (30) worked almost entirely within the present city limits of St. Louis, while (21) and (22) had a much less densely populated region to explore.—
W. W. Cooke, Jefferson, Wis.

Notes from Bloomington, Ind.

During my residence here (since Sept. 1881) my duties have been such as to allow much less time for observing the birds of the vicinity than I would like to have had. Yet I have made some observations worth recording. The most important of these is, perhaps, the finding of the Southern

MOCKINGBIRD. (*Mimus polyglottus*) at this place, which I believe is farther north than it has been found before in this state. Prof. Brayton, in his list of Indiana Birds, speaks of one reported as nesting near Indianapolis, but he does not vouch for the correctness of the statement. The only individual I have seen here was on April 29, 1882. I was passing through

the cemetery just west of town, when I saw a fine male perched near the top of a cedar tree. The morning was a glorious one. All nature seemed to be rejoicing at the return of another Spring-time, and *Mimus* was pouring forth his feeling in such a melody as he alone commands. His general behavior, his shyness, and his powers of flight, all went to prove that he was not an escaped cagebird, but a free, wild songster fresh from the sunny South. My friend, Prof. D. S. Jordan, was inclined to be a little skeptical when I reported this "find" to him; but a month later (May 29), while on a "geological tramp" with him and a party of students to Wyandotte cave, we had the good fortune to come upon another of this species. It was some thirty-five miles south of here in Orange Co. He was upon the top of a tall beach snag; was singing with great energy, now and then rising in the air ten to fifteen feet, and then returning to his perch, all the while in full song.

THE SUMMER REDBIRD, (*Pyrranga aestiva*) was moderately common here last Spring. During one morning in May I obtained six fine specimens. I have seen no mention of the occurrence of this beautiful bird and delightful songster farther north in this State than Wheatland, about thirty miles south of this. Mr. Ridgway found it "rather common" at that place in the Spring of 1881, but "much less so than near Mt. Carmel," Ills. On the Ohio river in the vicinity of Wyandotte Cave, I found it common early in June. Although I searched for its nest there and here, I was not successful in finding it.

THE BOBOLINK was observed here in flocks of twenty to thirty May 6. They were en route northward and were not seen after that date. They are said to breed in the northern part of this State, though in Carroll county, one hundred and thirty miles north of here, I have never seen them.

THE CAROLINA WREN, (*Thryothorus lu-*

dovicianus,) essentially a more southern species, has of late years become much more common here than formerly. There has scarcely been a day this Winter that I have not heard its clear, ringing note. I have taken it as far north as Delphi.

BIRD NOTES. February 10th was a royal day for bird-collecting here; I got the following: White-winged Crossbill, Red Crossbill, Lapland Longspur and Pine Goldfinch—neither of which I ever saw alive before. Neither of the Crossbills had ever been taken in the State before, at least there is no record of their having been taken. The last two are very rare.—*B. W. Everman, Bloomington, Ind.*

Odd Bird Songs.

Mr. Burroughs in his charming book, *Wake-Robin*, speaks of hearing the Golden-crowned Thrush sing a ditty much different from its usual song. He says it is a rare burst of melody, seldom indulged in, and delivered while the bird is in the air over the tree tops, or while chasing a rival through the forest. I have never heard any one else allude to this, but have had the same experience myself with the Golden-crowned and other of our warblers. In Pike county, Penn., last Spring, I found the Golden-crowned Thrush extremely common, and along a certain old mountain road almost any evening I could hear his musical squabble. It generally came from fighting birds; but one afternoon in the same place one sprang up before me, and singing a few notes of his usual tee-chee, suddenly broke off into a highly musical, very mixed up ditty, which ended in another tee-chee.

I was attracted once by an odd song that I had never heard, which came from far back in the woods. I followed the sound and discovered its author perched on one of the lower limbs of a great pine. The song was a mixture of rather sweet and harsh notes, very peculiar and as long as a sparrows. I let him sing again and then

brought him down, and he proved to be a Black-throated Green Warbler in perfect plumage. This indeed was an oddity, for the bird's usual sweet warble was vastly different from the notes I had just heard. Walking along a meadow-path one evening at dusk a Maryland Yellow-throat flew up before me, and hovering in the air for a moment in the manner of the dancing chat, sang a lively rattle-to-bang kind of song, then darted into the bushes and was quiet. Another time I noticed a bird of the same species, without any apparent cause or excitement, suddenly leave the bushes where he had been singing his usual notes, and flying twenty or thirty feet into the air, almost perpendicularly, sing the same melody while rising sky-lark fashion. As soon as he ceased he came quickly back to earth again and hid himself in the bushes.—*S. Frank Aaron, Phila., Pa.*

Studer's Birds of North America.

A new edition of the above work is being pushed upon the public from New York city, and a good many copies, will, no doubt, be sold to the inexperienced, especially as such papers as the *Independent* lends themselves to puff it. What we cannot understand is that the name of Dr. Elliott Coues is used to puff this book. At first we doubted it until we saw the Doctor's allusion to it in the *Bulletin*, and even now we should rather attribute it to his good nature than his better judgment. He is made to say:

"I can heartily commend the whole work as one admirably meeting the design of a popular ornithology of North America, at once instructive and entertaining, at a reasonable price. The text is perfectly reliable. The technical nomenclature is correct, being that used by the best ornithologists of this country."

For the benefit of our readers we would like to ask the Doctor if he did really write the above endorsement of the work, and if he will give his reasons for so doing? The work is also strongly lauded by Prof. Henry A. Ward and Prof. J. S. Newberry, of Columbia College, N. Y. We have no objection for these gentlemen to place

themselves on record as endorsing this book. They may have good reasons for so doing; if so, we think they owe it as a duty to our ornithologists to give them. Prof. Wm. D. Hornaday, Taxidermist U. S. National Museum, is made to say:

"I have carefully compared the figures in 'Studer's Birds of North America' with those in Audubon's great work, and am free to say that they are more accurate in outline as well as more faithfully colored to Nature. Numerous examples in support of this could be given."

Prof. Hornaday makes a statement that is tangible; something to tie to, and as we have probably devoted more time to the study of Audubon's life and works than any person now living, we propose to give this Professor a chance to either maintain his statement or retract. To do this we will meet him in New York at a time to be set to accommodate both. We will take a copy of Audubon's original edition out of some library, and take a copy of Studer's Birds, original edition, also at random, and the comparison shall be made by good judges selected for the occasion, and we will accept the result and publicly announce it through the O. and O. We will state further that we will pay Prof. H. the full subscription price for every copy of Audubon's original edition he will send us, and we challenge him to make us the same offer for Studer's Birds.

For the benefit of the above gentlemen we will state that we have not known a single person besides themselves that endorse this work, and nearly every purchaser that we have known, and we are in a position to know many, were willing to sell at about half price. We have known many sets offered at less than half price.

Since the above was written we received a letter from a collector who writes:

"Am sorry I ever bought that work of Jasper's as it is not what I thought it was; but I bought it and paid \$40 for it on ——— recommendation."

We have kept no letters referring to this work, but we now ask our readers to give us their opinions freely. One writer states that he "was badly sold in buying the work." Another writes:

"Feb. 11—I enclose a circular sent me by Studer & Co. that you may compare C. J. Maynard's puff with the just criticism of 'C. H. M.' of Jasper's birds of N. A. in *Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club*."

"I am much pleased with Studer's Birds of North America. In the grouping of the birds, arrangement of light and shade, in the perspective and delineations of the forms and feathers, Dr. Jasper has certainly surpassed all other artists, producing the best pictures of the species which I have ever seen."—C. J. Maynard.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANATOMY OF BIRDS, by R. W. Shufeldt, M. D., U. S. A.—We have before us the last work of Dr. Shufeldt on North American Ornithology. It is chiefly devoted to the anatomy of four families of North American birds, Burrowing Owl, Horned Lark, Grouse, and Vulture, and fills about 220 pages of a Pub. Doc., and is certainly less technical than the Dr.'s previous publications.

While the study of anatomy is a necessary and a useful branch in ornithology, it is exceedingly dry; so dry that few scientists will devote the time to study published works, let alone write them. The Dr. has evidently learned that his previously dry technical style was too much for the general reader, and this volume is a decided improvement in that the matter is more of a general ornithological nature, and the work contains about twenty illustrations, mostly new to us, of birds in full plumage, besides many full pages of Anatomical plates. We hope the Doctor will continue his good work as his duties will permit, our readers fully appreciating the great work he is doing for them.

RARE BOOKS. For five years we have earnestly and anxiously hunted for a copy of Geo. Ord's life of Alex. Wilson. At last we have found it. A thin 8 vo., price \$4.00. We have advertised scarce portraits of Wm. Bartram, really the first American ornithologist, and instructor of Alex. Wilson; two only have been sold and those to a London dealer. We have advertised the American Partridges by Gould, mostly life size, containing every partridge on this continent known at that time,

the only enquiry coming from a London dealer who would take the work if it could be delivered there. We have offered a set of Yarrell's works, 5 vol. for \$75 and no buyers. This state of things is as interesting to us as a rare find, for fact wipes theory out. We never knew but one set of Yarrell's like this for sale, and \$125 was the price asked.

"CLIMBING IRONS."—I disagree with Ernest Ingersoll, and say use irons, but think on large trees a belt should be used passing around the body of the climber and trunk of the tree. I have one made of stout webbing in sections of two feet each, and fastened together with buckles, and as the tree decreases in size, I shorten it by taking out a section. It should pass through loops in the back of the climbing jacket. In all large trees you are liable to strike the irons into thick dead bark that will suddenly give way. Last Spring while climbing a large oak to a Red-shouldered Hawk's nest, seventy-five feet to the ground, when fifty or sixty feet from the ground I met with such an accident, and but for my belt would have thereafter lost all interest in Oology. The belt saved my life.—*R. Wes McBride, Waterloo, De Kalb Co., Indiana.*

THE GANNET, *Tula bassana*, or SOLAN GOOSE.—Gannets are met with in Iceland, the Faroe Isles, on the coast of Norway, and on the Atlantic and Pacific shores of North America. They are constant residents in the British Isles, where the principal breeding places are Lundy Isle, St. Kilda, and the Bass Rock. The last named being the most generally known. It is situated in the Firth of Forth opposite to Canty Bay. Solan Geese, as the Gannets are usually termed, visit the Bass early in the Spring, stay to breed and leave in October.

The Bass Rock during the breeding season is certainly a sight to delight the heart of an ornithologist. Many thousands of Gannets, Gulls, *L. fuscus*, *L. argentatus*, and *L. tridactyla*, Guillemots,

U. troile and Puffins, *Fraterecula arctica*, breed upon its magnificent cliffs. The Gannets build their nests upon the flat surface of the rock, the Gulls and Guillemots occupy the ledges, and the Puffins make use of the deepest holes they can find. Before landing upon the Bass Rock leave must be obtained from the keeper. The landing place is at the entrance to the old fort which held out so long for James II. Certain parts of the surface of the rock are almost completely covered by the nests of the Gannets. The cries of the Gulls and the peculiar "grog," "grog" of the Solan Geese almost deafen the visitor. The Gannets are very tame and permit strangers to walk among them, and even in some instances to handle them. The Solan Goose lays one large white egg, but it soon becomes a dirty yellow color. The young bird when hatched has a black skin, which soon becomes covered with pure white down. Later it assumes a black plumage, which finally changes to the white of the mature bird.

Large numbers of the fresh eggs are collected, sent to London and sold as delicacies for invalids. Many thousands of the young birds are shot and salted and used as food during the Winter. The old birds are often captured by means of fish nailed on pieces of wood, which are then placed in the sea. The Solan Goose seeing the fish on the surface of the water, drops from a great height upon it and breaks its neck by the force of the concussion. It is very interesting to watch Gannets fishing. They can perceive a fish from a great distance and drop like a flash upon their prey. They are very useful to fishermen, who learn where the shoals of fish are by seeing them fishing. They are very voracious, and the quantity of fish required for their support must be very great indeed. Gannets attain a good old age. Several have bred on the Bass Rock for over thirty years.—*J. T. T. Reed, Ryhope, Durham Co., England.*

GOLD FINCH.—Feb. 12, early morning, ground covered with frozen snow and quite wintry, but with a bright sun. An American Gold Finch flew across the road and alighted on an apple tree in plain sight, singing precisely the same notes as if it was the mating season, and with the same undulating flight, and the brightest Winter plumaged specimen we ever saw.—*Ed.*

WINTER BIRDS have been more abundant than usual thus far. Some friends of mine secured eight Pine Grosbeaks, among them two males. I have seen a small flock of them in this town. Shrikes, Redpolls and Snow Buntings are quite abundant.—*L. R. Rich, Saratoga, N. Y.*

Notes from Southampton, Mass.

PHEBE BIRD.—Sept. 6, 1882, saw two young Pewees, (*Sayornis fuscus*.) which were just old enough to fly. Was it not late? H. D. Minot says the Pewees "rarely if ever arrive before the last week in March." I observed them on March 1, 1880, but in 1882 I did not see them until April 2d.

RUFFED GROUSE.—Last Summer I was riding through a rather low, swampy place, when I heard something clucking in the bushes. I went toward the bushes, when a Ruffed Grouse or Partridge ran past me, making her peculiar call to her chicks. I went on a little farther, and saw, coming towards me, nine or ten chicks, apparently just hatched. I stooped and put down my hand when one of the little fellows ran right into it. I carried it to the carriage to show to my companion, and when I went back I could have caught the whole brood in the same way, as they made no attempt to hide.—*T. Mills Clark, Southampton, Mass.*

AMERICAN REDSTART, (*Setophaga ruticilla*) This lovely warbler first made its appearance in this township May 12th, 1857. It is with us a common Summer resident and is found breeding. It seems to prefer low heavily timbered lands and swampy places, in fact I am not able to give a single in-

stance of seeing it, or finding its nest in any other situation. The Redstart is often found searching for insects on the ground among the decaying leaves and old fallen timber. On one occasion I followed a beautiful male over one hundred yards, that was busily engaged in securing a meal, and was frequently so near it that I could have easily reached it with the muzzle of my gun. The following are the dates of arrival of this species in Locke for twenty-six consecutive years:

May 12, 1857.	June 5, 1864.	May 10, 1871.	April 30, 1878.
May 12, 1858.	May 18, 1865.	May 1, 1872.	May 4, 1879.
May 11, 1859.	May 3, 1866.	May 5, 1873.	May 4, 1880.
May 7, 1860.	May 8, 1867.	May 7, 1874.	May 4, 1881.
May 8, 1861.	May 12, 1868.	May 9, 1875.	May 3, 1882.
May 10, 1862.	May 3, 1869.	May 9, 1876.	
May 2, 1863.	May 7, 1870.	May 10, 1877.	

—*Dr. H. A. Atkins, Locke, Michigan.*

WHITE-BELLIED NUTHATCH.—My first nest was found in April, 1880, but thinking it too early for eggs I waited until May, when young rewarded me. This nest was in a large natural cavity in an oak tree, about twenty feet high. The nest was composed principally of a sort of felt-like substance, mixed with some bark and lined with hair. It was about 100 yards from the second nest, collected April 26, 1882. This nest was in an enormous white oak, on a hill-side, and fully fifty feet from the ground. The entrance was a knot hole, in the live wood, about $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2$ inches. The cavity inside was quite large and was nearly filled by the nest, which was composed almost entirely of oak bark and a lining of hair. The nest contained six fresh eggs, which I secured by means of a rude wooden spoon. They were, before blowing, of a rosy-white color, spotted thickly with reddish brown. The birds showed much solicitude, frequently coming within a few feet and rapidly repeating their usual note.—*L. R. Rich, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.*

OWLS AND HORNED GREBE.—On Dec. 19th an old Dutchman brought into town a Barn Owl, the first that I have ever seen or heard of in this locality. On the same date a farmer brought in a Horned Grebe,

alive, which he said he and his dog had caught in his meadows. He took it home again and kept it a few days, when it died, and I now have it in my possession. It was in immature plumage, of course, and was the first Grebe outside of the common Pied-billed that I have ever seen here. Within the last month I have examined specimens of Long-eared, Short-eared, Barn, Screech, Barred and Great Horned Owls.—*W. T. Warrick, Washington, Pa.*

NOTES FROM CONNECTICUT.—A pair of Mallard Ducks, (*Anas boscas*), male and female, were shot in this town Oct. 30, 1882. A man saw them fly over to a little pond near his barn, and was lucky enough to take them both at one shot. This is the first time that I have ever known of this species occurring here. I have in my collection a Velvet Duck, (*Melanetta velvetina*), which I shot Oct. 19, 1881, in Crystal pond in this town. She seemed perfectly at home, and was busily engaged in diving for food. I have also a Dovekie, (*Alle nigricans*), that was taken about six miles from here in the town of Pomfret, Nov. 23, 1878. It was just after a heavy north-east gale, and the bird had evidently been blown inland from Mass. Bay, although the distance must be more than fifty miles. It was caught alive in a field.—*C. M. Jones, Eastford, Conn.*

PHOEBE BIRDS IN WINTER.—This Winter I have seen two specimens of *Sayornis fusca*, (Dec. 26 and Jan. 18,) and my friend, Mr. Wm. T. Allen of Gaylord, Clarke Co., Va., (thirty miles south of this,) reports another, Jan. 15th. The ground has been covered with snow for three weeks, and the Winter rather harder than usual, but the birds seemed in good condition. They were prospecting about outhouses when seen, under the eaves of which they would find the cocoons of spiders; cabbage butterflies, and similar insects. They uttered a weak sort of note, something like "chek," which I have never heard before.—*Edgar A. Small, Hagerstown, Md.*

ON THE MOVE.—Mr. Charles F. Batchelder of the Nuttall Ornithological Club is having what we should call a *good time* in the region where all *good* ornithologists would like to go. He writes from Riverside, Cal.: "Am doing a good deal of collecting here, and have been also at points in New Mexico and Arizona." We wish him a safe return with a good fat Note Book, and we'll keep an eye on the *Bulletin* for the result.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS here in November. Mr. Worthington mounted one of them.—*Moses B. Griffing, Shelter Island, N. Y.*

WANTED TO KNOW. Why the compositor made such mistakes in our notes on the "Birds of Ohio" as shore, for those, and Wharton, for Wheaton? We did not see proof.

If the Editors of the Bull. of the Nutt. Orn. Club have been identified sufficiently to satisfy the scientific ornithologist?

If ornithologists really appreciate the beautiful work being published at Circleville, Ohio?

SUMMER BIRDS in Winter. Dec. 13th, two Long Sparrows; 20th, small flock of Meadow Larks; 25th, Golden Winged Woodpecker; Jan. 1st, '83, Yellow Rump Warblers quite common among the cedars; 12th, three Bluebirds; 26th, shot a Bay-winged Bunting; 15th, Belted King Fisher shot at Middletown.—*Chas. H. Neff, Portland, Conn.*

OWLS.—Received tin-type of a Barred Owl and two Screech Owls from W. W. Coes. Thanks.

YELLOW RUMP WARBLER.—Shot, Jan. 12, 1883, a specimen of "*D. coronata*" in orchard. Thermometer at zero, ground covered with snow. On examination I found the bird to be fat and healthy. Crop and stomach contained berries from the Red Cedar. Have been a close observer of birds for the last ten years and I think this is the first record of its occurrence in Winter in Northern Ohio.—*A. Hall, E. Rockport.*

ORNITHOLOGIST

— A N D —

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VOL. VIII.

BOSTON, MAY, 1883.

No. 5.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NEW STATIONS.

No. 2, Florida Royalieu, F. S. RISLEY.

" 42, Illinois, Griggsville, T. W. PARKER.

No. 30 reports one Pine Goldfinch, 1-18; two pairs of Golden-crowned Kinglets, 1-6; one Brown Creeper, 1-6; a flock of 30-36 Red-poll Linnetts, 2-7; a flock of thousands of Lapland Longspurs, 1-6; one Swamp Sparrow, 1-29; four Purple Grackles, 1-18; and a few Herring Gulls on the Miss. River at the southern part of the city, where the strong current prevented the forming of ice.

No. 60 has seen this Winter, Quail, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Red-poll Linnet, Pine Grosbeak, Bohemian Waxwing; 2-7 a Canada Jay and seven White-winged Crossbills were sent him from eighty miles north of his station; and on 2-26 saw a single female White-winged Crossbill.

No. 43 reports that contrary to all former custom the Blackbirds of the three kinds, Red-winged, Cowbird and Purple Grackle, together with Mourning Doves, have stayed all Winter in the timber; 2-6 saw four compound flocks of Blackbirds. He explains their presence by supposing they had read Vennor & Tice and had seen "We are going to have an open Winter." Poor deluded birds! 2-8, saw six Crows; and 2-10 a Red-headed Woodpecker; 1-10, is reasonably certain he saw a Swallow-tailed Kite flying swiftly toward the South.

No. 47 has seen during the Winter, Cedar Birds, several flocks; Short-eared Owls quite numerous; Barn Owl (?) one; Amer-

ican Goldfinch, several small flocks; Crows seen every week; Bohemian Waxwings, one flock of fifteen; Pine Grosbeaks, three; Goshawks, two; and Snowy Owls, six.

No. 45 has also seen the Snowy Owl during Jan. In latter part of Jan. saw a flock of Sparrows, and from their note took them to be the White-crowned Sparrow. 2-25 a single Crow; 2-27, Horned Larks, six; have never before seen them here unless the ground was partially bare. These were in the main street of town.

No. 35 says: Yellow-rumped Warblers are Wintering here in large numbers.

No. 37 has had the good fortune to find, 1-19, the Golden-winged Woodpecker and the Red-bellied Woodpecker; also the Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper and Cardinal Redbird. 2-15 he saw Cedar Waxwing and Purple Finch. 1-19 an English Sparrow was very busy in carrying straws to the top of a window, second story and east side of the building.

No. 44 reports Crows, Bohemian Waxwings, and of Owls the Great-horned, Barred, Screech and Short-eared.

No. 57: The last week of Dec. a flock of Prairie Chickens of at least 200 and possibly 300 were seen hovering around a straw-stack three miles from town. The weather was intensely cold. There were a few gulleys full of low brush and scrub oaks not far distant from which they came and into which they flew to roost. The balance of the Winter there have been seen very few. Is Jack Frost to blame for this? Many Quail have frozen in the

thickets under a temperature of 38 and 42 degrees below zero.

No. 38 received in Jan. a Harlan's Buzzard and a Snowy Owl from near his home.

No. 21 on 2-10 saw two Tufted Titmice, five Carolina Wrens and one Lapland Longspur.

No. 22 has shot during the Winter, of Owls: 1 Short-eared, 5 Barred, 2 Saw Whet, 3 Great-horned and 1 Snowy, and on 2-10 saw a Meadow Lark.

No. 52: Contrary to usual custom, a few Crows have stayed with us this Winter. Have seen them when the mercury said —30 degrees. Can see more Crows here during any one week of Summer than I saw during a nine years' residence at Ripon, Wis., only sixty miles from here. Last Fall a flock of 75 to 100 House Sparrows left their usual quarters on the main street of the city and Wintered at a large barn near my house. Their numbers have constantly decreased until now only three remain. The flocks in other parts of the city have suffered the same way, and not more than twenty Sparrows can now be found in a city which last Fall was full of them. Thanks are certainly due to some kind agency for the good work. If it was not for the strict city law against shooting within the city limits I would soon finish those that remain. Perhaps this may account for part of the decrease: 2-13 I saw a Shrike swoop down on an House Sparrow and kill it almost immediately; a cat scared the Butcher Bird from its prey and I secured the Sparrow. March 1st, while hunting near a river, saw and secured a pair of Evening Grosbeaks. This must be considered a rare experience, as in twelve years' hunting through this part of the State I have never before seen them. In Minn. I found them quite common. Their stomachs contained nothing but the buds of trees.

No. 58 has found the Brown Creeper in Jan., even so far north as his station.

No. 32, contrary to all the recorded hab-

its of that bird, has found this Winter the Cardinal Grosbeak.

No. 38 found Cardinal Grosbeak, Swamp Sparrow, Tufted Titmouse, Crow and Yellow-shafted Flicker.

No. 26 shows his more Southern residence by reporting Meadow Larks common all Winter, Cardinal Grosbeak, Towhee Bunting Bluebirds, common; Robins, a few; Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Sparrow Hawk, Turkey Buzzard, Black Vulture, Wild Pigeons, Mourning Dove, Wild Turkey, the last six all common and resident. Also a few Blue Herons and Green Herons, together with a few Wood Ducks. The Lapland Longspurs have showed their dislike of the northern weather by appearing there in large flocks, much beyond their usual southern limit.

As I write, March 6th, the first real wave of northward migration has been progressing for about fifteen days. It was at first very rapid, the birds spreading in a few days over a large area, but it was suddenly checked, then advanced once more until it reached nearly to northern Illinois. Here again it was stopped by so fierce a polar breeze that most of the birds have returned somewhat to the south.

A fuller and more accurate account will be given in the next number.—*W. W. Cooke, Jefferson, Wis.*

—♦—
 FEARLESS CRITICISM.—Gilbert White's accuracy and natural modesty made him state facts of which he was not absolutely assured in a hypothetical form. "I think," he says, "that White Owls never hoot." To this Rennie appends a note—"White Owls do hoot. I have shot one in the act." Waterton, who held a low opinion of the professor's practical knowledge, remarks, "As Mr. Rennie asserts that he has shot a White Owl in the act of hooting, I admit that that particular Owl did hoot, but no other White Owl since the world began ever did hoot."

Our Publications.

I like your magazine on account of its practical information and freshness of character.

Being an immoderate lover of birds and animals for pets, (so far as I can see them thrive when domesticated or confined,) I am always seeking to know something about them. I had occasion to look over a lot of your former publications a short time since and I wondered where so much of just that kind of material was found, when I think what an amount of comfort I took in reading

“FAMILIAR SCIENCE AND FANCIER’S JOURNAL.”

I wonder that it should have failed. At present I feel lost without more of that kind of reading and don’t know where to find it that is fresh and instructive.

[No one took greater pleasure in Familiar Science than we did, and it was a success so long as we could give it our personal attention; but when we were called to other duties so that we could no longer open and answer the correspondence, its downward career financially commenced until its suspension in 1879. The six bound volumes are in our library. They cost us many thousands of dollars but we are proud of them. They taught all to be humane to animal kind, and good fellowship, while the iron heel of fearlessness was brought down on all frauds who tried to prey on Fanciers and Naturalists; and were we younger it would again appear precisely as when it suspended—but that day is past.—Ed.]

GOLDEN EAGLE CAPTURED.—March 1st, a fine specimen of this bird was brought to a taxidermist here to be mounted. The person who obtained it claimed to have knocked it over with a club as it sat on the fence. The skin showed no marks except a heavy contusion on back of head. Up to this date I have marked down five nests of Least Tit.—*A. D. Butterfield, San Jose, Cal., March 13, 1883.*

Oological.

I think M. Day Murphy, Jr., in the February number of *O. and O.*, misunderstands the meaning of the word “set,” as applied to a nest or clutch of eggs (?) His so-called set of eight (8) Robin’s eggs were two (2) separate sets. He might just as well call the three (3) sets of Phœbe’s a set of fourteen (14) eggs. Eggs taken from a nest one by one as fast as they are laid until the bird stops laying cannot be called a *set* of eggs. Green Herons in this locality lay from four (4) to five eggs to a set. Clapper Rails average from 1.82×1.25 to 1.63×1.14 ; Virginia Rails from $1.30 \times .96$ to $1.23 \times .90$; Sora Rails, $1.35 \times 1.$ to $1.15 \times .85$, according to Samuels. From my own experience the Virginia Rails are always larger than the Sora, lighter in color and with fewer and smaller markings. Clapper Rails are ovoidal in shape, tapering slightly toward smaller end, but not sharply pointed, ground color, a dirty cream or drab, with a few spots of reddish brown mingled with purple shell marks, mostly on and about the larger end. Virginia and Sora Rails are similar in shape to the above, but much smaller in size, the Virginia having a light cream ground with none of the olivaceous tint so common in the Sora. The markings of the former are small, of a reddish brown, with purple shell spots scattered over the surface, but more numerous near the larger end. The Sora is darker in color, and with the olive tint before mentioned, though I have specimens which are a dark, rich cream, without any olive. The spots are of two shades of brown, one overlaying the other and with the same purple spots or blotches. None of the Rails, to my knowledge, are ever so thickly spotted as to have the ground color entirely concealed.—*Snowdon Howland, Newport, R. I.*

ARRIVALS. March 1st, Bluebirds arrive; 15th, Fox Sparrows; 16th, Song Sparrows sing; 17th, first general singing, Red-winged Blackbirds come.—*H. D. Minot.*

GOLDEN EAGLE'S NEST AND EGGS.—I wish to place on record the find of a splendid set of *Aquila* eggs, on the 18th of March. The nest was about seven miles from town in an unfrequented range of hills, with only a few live oaks bordering the gulches. In one of the largest of these this pair of birds had built for three or four years, I should judge from appearances. The nest was situated so as to command a view of all the valley before it and hid from behind by a dense mass of limbs and foliage. As soon as I got within a mile of the nest I saw the male leave the place and sail slowly out of sight; and the female left by the time I was within 300 yards. On climbing to the nest I found the two eggs covered by a fresh twig of oak. Do you not think the old bird placed it there to conceal the eggs? So I took it. The nest was a cumbersome affair, and measured fifty inches across and eighteen inches in depth. The eggs were in a slight depression, which was lined with wild oat straw and the hairy tops of the Spanish "soap-root," and it was about forty feet from the ground. The eggs measure 2.97×2.25 and 2.87×2.25 and had a white background; one was thickly spotted on the larger end and the other the same on the small end. I regret that I was unable to get the old birds; but contrary to the boasted courage of the Golden Eagle I never saw them after they left the place. It was the same when I procured the other eggs, three years ago.—*Will Stembeck, Hollister, Cal.*

GREEN HERON AND FROG.—That illustration of the Tern with the "Whale in his belly," reminds me of the shooting of a Green Heron a year ago, in the act of swallowing one of those whopping big frogs. The "croaker" was too much for the bird, who was so busy trying either to swallow the frog, or disgorge the part already half way down, that he didn't notice me at all. I presume I might have dispatched him with a club if I had been so inclined.—*W.*

Ask your friends to subscribe.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens.*)—They are the last of our Summer birds to arrive, are here by the last of May, and all gone South by the last of August. They arrive single and soon are in pairs, hunting from oak to oak for a good snug hole to nest in. My first nest was got under particular circumstances. I was out collecting through one of the many canons that are found around Haywards. Was coming up from a creek to get over the fence to the road, when I noticed a bird new to me gathering horse hairs in the road. It flew across the creek to an old dead Sycamore tree on the bank, went into a hole about seven feet up, on side of the tree. When it came out its mate went with it to the road and perched on the fence. He kept up a low whistling note, while his mate was getting more materials for the nest. When they went back to the tree and came out again. I went over to see their building place. I noticed a large heap of twigs, roots, dung, and horse hair and some of cows, all laying at the foot of the tree. I did not take much notice of this; looked in the hole, no nest. What could they have been doing? Went around back side of tree from creek, found it all hollow up the tree. That settled the question of the heap of material. They had been trying to fill up that hole, like Mark Twain's "Blue Jay" that tried to fill up the hole in the roof of a miner's cabin with acorns. "Well." I thought, "Mrs. Flycatcher, I will help you out of this filling up business." So I took a lot of large limbs, broke them up, and placed them in across one another up as far as I could reach. This was on May 22d, 1880. Went over to the tree and found the Flycatchers near by. They were very shy and worried at my presence. I reached in the hole and took out five fine fresh eggs. They were the first set I had found. They are now before me, and in comparing them with sets of the Great-crested Fly-catcher," I find they are somewhat larger. (As I have

no rule, I cannot give the measurements.) They are more pyriform and the ground color is lighter, are marked and blotched with purplish red and a neutral tint. The markings look as though dashed on with a water color brush, more at the larger end. The nest was composed of twigs, dung, and grass, lined with horse hair and bird feathers. I found them common around Stockton and Kings River. They allow no other bird to share their tree; will drive the Woodpecker out of his hole and take it for their own. This I know to be a fact as a brother collector told me he had found a nest on the eggs of a Gairdner's Woodpecker.—*W. O. Emerson, Haywards, Cal.*

The Blue-winged Yellow Warbler.

I found a nest of the little *Helminthophaga pinus* last Summer and could scarcely credit my sight, as I recognized beyond question the little rare bird starting almost from under my feet from the coarse swamp grass—a new situation entirely to me for a nesting place of this species. It was a moist, spongy place, far back in the woods; the old Maples had been cleared off about two years before and coarse swamp grasses and weeds had sprung up among the sprouting stumps. The little bird fluttered off about ten feet and perched on a low spray quietly, not even a “chip,” and my first thought was a Maryland Yellow Throat, for it was in such a situation as I often find their nests; but no, the bird commences a series of the most grotesque gyrations imaginable in such a little creature—the tail drawn down and spread to its fullest extent, displaying to the utmost all the six white feathers therein, and thus indicating the species unmistakably—with low bowed head and drooping wings she stood and silently watched me as I exultantly clutched the tempting prize—the nest with its complement of five little spotted eggs.

The nest was built directly on the moist ground and its base was damp from the

contact. It was not unlike a Maryland Yellow-throat's nest except in being much more bulky, the base being chiefly leaves of Chestnut and Beach placed endwise instead of circularly, as with most birds, and grapevine bark, being neatly lined with fine grasses. The eggs were quite fresh and rosy, showing that incubation had barely commenced at this time, June 16th, 1882.

It would be very difficult to tell what is the usual nest complement of this species, from my experience, for this is the fourth nest I have found containing respectively two, three, four, and five, when the birds ceased laying, though I thought in the case of the two that it was broken up by a violent storm that filled the nest with water and caused the birds to desert it.

One nest was built in the grass about four inches from the ground, another in a little clump of bushes about twelve inches up, another in a wild Rose bush about two feet from the ground, and this last one directly on the damp ground of a swamp; so it is equally difficult to declare what is their usual nesting place.

None of the others were in a swamp, and one was on a hillside at quite an elevation, the one with the set of two, which, as already stated, the birds deserted at this stage. One of the eggs is before me and measures $.61 \times .49$ in., being very sparsely marked with a few minute dots scattered promiscuously over the whole shell, and a few larger spots, some quite dark and some very light near the large end.

I found a nest in a little thicket of wild Rose, June 15, 1871. The female was on the nest, where she sat very close till I almost touched her with my hand, when she fluttered slowly away as if disabled. I found incubation had commenced at that time, but had not progressed so far as to injure the eggs for the cabinet, and I have been measuring them and find the extremes to be about $.62 \times .48$ in. No. 1, and $.59 \times .50$ in. No. 2. In markings No. 1 is thinly spotted with minute dots, with no

resemblance to a ring, but the spots somewhat larger and a little more numerous at the large end, the ground color being a fresh rosy white, before being blown, and the markings light brown, nearly cinnamon. In No. 2 the spots are more numerous, forming a distinguishable ring near the large end, but the spots are very small and even lighter in color than those of No. 1. So far as my observation extends the eggs are usually less elongated than those of most of the Warblers and more sparsely marked.

It is stated that Dr. Brewer published in the Proceedings of the Boston Natural History Society for May, 1879, an account of the finding of a nest of this species at New Haven, Conn., by N. A. Eddy, adding that he believed it to be the only instance of its being taken in New England; but two of the nests alluded to above were taken long before that. The bird is in fact quite common here in the migrations, and the collector will hear their quaint song, if such it can be called, in every warm glade of any extent in our woods by the middle of May, about which time they first appear, May 5th, 1880, and May 12th, 1881, and perched on the summit of some small tree keep up their insect like note, repeating it, at intervals of two or three minutes, by the hour. A friend listening to it for a while very successfully imitated it by violently drawing in his breath through his closed teeth, and slowly breathing it out again in the same manner with a slight vocal sound at the same time. The birds become much rarer as the breeding season arrives, or else more quiet, the former I think, for I find them usually quite demonstrative when their nesting place is invaded, and that their note is changed to a more vocal one. But if the birds go further it is a mystery to me whither, for my ornithological friends only a few miles further north declare that they never find it. Mr. Sage once wrote me from Portland, triumphantly, "At last we have got it;" but when I saw their

specimen I found it the still rarer *H. leucobronchialis*. Since my first acquaintance with the bird, more than a dozen years ago, I have never failed to find them in considerable numbers every Spring. I have been sometimes amused at a remark in "Samuels' Birds of New England," which I have also seen copied by other authors, that he "once saw a small flock at Dedham, Mass., &c." Of all the solitary birds I never saw any more exclusively so than this species, and among the numbers I have seen I never saw a flock consist of more than a pair, male and female, and I have often hoped no author would credit the bird to Massachusetts again without some better authority than that.—*J. N. Clark, Saybrook, Conn.*

Is it Honest?

If we see a book offered for sale and we purchase a copy, and two or three years later another work is offered by the same author and we again purchase a copy and find in the second work twenty-five per cent of the matter and cuts that were in the previous work, "Is it Honest?" is it not a fraudulent transaction to the extent of the reproduced matter?

GOOD SHOT.—R. N. Denison secured at one shot, near the mouth of the Connecticut River, the middle of February, three Lapland Long-spurs, two Shore Larks and one Tree Sparrow.

WANTED TO KNOW. If the following named birds could be kept as cage birds, viz.: Canada Jays, Cardinal Redbirds, Golden Robins and Scarlet Tanagers.—*A Subscriber.*

JASPER'S BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA.—In glancing over the above work we notice that the pair of Woodcocks have five young, that the Summer Redbird's beak is as red as the body, and that "Audubon's Birds of North America" are quoted, and that Dr. Coues is quoted very often. Can this account for the Doctor's endorsement of this work?

Alexander Wilson's Works.

When Wilson wrote his book it was purely from nature. He went into the woods and wilds for subjects and matter for his brush and pencil. If he quoted anything it was from persons that had good opportunities for observation and in whom he could rely. He makes no quotations from the works of others except to expose their errors and correct their mistakes. He was *Par excellence* the American Ornithologist, the father of ornithology in this country. His whole mind and energies were bent on the one object of his life. He does not appear to have sought society, he does not appear to have been fascinating, and yet he made a few chosen friends and held them through life. They were slaves to his every desire. His friend, William Bartram, responded to his every wish. It was the same with his "Brither Scott," Alexander Lawson, without a doubt one of the best of engravers on copper of his time or any time since. Lawson never crossed him but once and that was when he criticised some of his Poems in the edition of 1790, when Wilson snatched the volume and threw it into the fire saying that "if a friend found so much fault it could not be of much account." Lawson never crossed him in his ornithological desires and we have it in his own words that he worked on some of the finest plates at prices that did not bring him over fifty cents per day. Only think of it, one of the finest copper plate engravers working for from three to five cents per hour. If that is not devotion to a friend and his work we do not know what is. There has been written some six or seven lives of Wilson, but not one that does him justice, not one that shows a proper research. Even his friend Ord did not grasp the situation, and only tells part of the story. Rev. Alexander Grossart is the last one to write his life. He gathers a great many materials crudely together, but it is plain that his

bigotry runs away with his better judgment, and the life of Alexander Wilson as well as that of Audubon is yet to be written.

ALEXANDER WILSON.

Thee Wilson, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Mourn ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye groups that crop the heather bud;
Ye Curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling Plover;
And mourn, ye whirring patrich brood;
He's gane forever!

Mourn clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And, when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warls, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

The Clapper Rail,

Or Mud Hen, Marsh or Meadow Hen, (*Rallus longirostris crepitans*.) This bird, which answers equally well to any of the above names, is found in certain parts of the great salt meadows along the coasts of New Jersey and Long Island in large numbers. Being a very shy bird, living along the creeks of the salt meadows where few men go early in the year, its habits, time of coming and going, &c., are not well known. It is supposed they travel at night. The time of arrival on Long Island is dependent on the season, but from the 1st to the 15th of May is the time they are first seen. Their food consists of worms, aquatic insects, &c. They form a group apart from the other Rails during the breeding season and are not very sociable, but, on the contrary, exceedingly shy. Instinct does much for these as well as other birds, and knowing how the wonderful powers of man are directed toward their destruction, or to obtaining their eggs, they are obliged to carefully hide their nests under some tuft of grass, left standing from the previous year, or among the reeds, where they are entirely hidden from the Hawks and Owls and their worst enemy, man. They make but little

preparation except to select a spot above the reach of tide, and with a little old hay beneath and a good screen overhead, they commence business. Nests are found from the 15th of May to the 20th of June in abundance; and even as late as the 1st of August fresh eggs have been obtained. Farmers, and others in the localities where these birds are abundant, have been in the habit of "going egging," as they term it, for years, gathering in a season bushels of eggs, in the aggregate, and using them in the culinary operations of the family. My first discovery of this mine of Rails' eggs was an accidental one. At a stand in a market my attention was directed to a basket of 200 or more of these eggs. Thinking it might be well to secure a few of them I enquired and found the price to be according to weight, at what they were worth for cooking purposes. Thinking it a shame to destroy so many specimens, I took the lot, getting information about the locality and the promise of more the succeeding week. Judge of my surprise the next week when 500 or more arrived. For two years I took all our collectors brought, but owing to the prospect of a fine of \$25 for each egg taken, and not being able to have such expensive eggs in my collection, it was deemed best to leave the eggs to be hatched for the benefit of the gunners. I enquired in the market this Fall for the killed birds, and found a large lot at one stand at from \$1 to \$1.50 per dozen. They weigh about one pound each, but are very unsalable from some cause, a large lot having to be thrown away. Although not web-footed they can swim pretty well when going from island to island, or across the creeks, accompanied by their family of young Rails. I do not think they have more than one nest in a year, unless their first nest is broken up. The number of eggs in a nest varies from eight to sixteen, not many reaching the latter figure. The size and color varies very much. I have eggs $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by

$1\frac{3}{8}$ broad; most are about $1\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$, although found occasionally $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$ inch. The color varies from bluish white to light brown, and the markings vary from faint dots to heavy splashes of brown. The farmers, when gathering the eggs for culinary uses, if in doubt as to the freshness of the eggs, dip them in shallow water, and if they sink and lie on the sides they call them good; if they sink but stand on end they put them back in the nest; but if they float they know them to be bad. The young are full grown about the 1st of September. The C. Rails being very shy, form burrows under the growing grass, so that their nests are not easily found; and were it not for the fact of their placing their nests near some tall grass or bunch of reeds it would be next to impossible to find them. They seldom take to wing unless they are suddenly startled, trusting to their being able to run and dodge their pursuers in the reeds. While setting, they stick to their nests to the last moment, and are sometimes caught on the nest. They startle you sometimes as you uncover the nest. To use the words of one collector, "They are sometimes quite bold and saucy, if it is near hatching time, and squawk like a setting hen." Having had a large number to distribute during 1880 and 1881 it has reduced values in catalogues; but having none to send out in 1883, another change may be necessary. Most of the C. Rail eggs were found on the north side of Long Island. I have not met with this species on the Elizabeth or Newark great meadows, but found one nest of the Virginia R., containing eight eggs, on the Salt Meadows at Elizabeth. The gunners are very numerous about here, and birds stand but little chance. We have but two or three good collectors of eggs in this neighborhood.—*B. B., Elizabeth, N. J.*

GOLDEN EAGLES. Since the above was in type William Stembeck reports another set of two Golden Eagle's eggs.

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No. 6.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

The first wave of migration this Spring has started, passed up the Mississippi Valley and reached British America. Let us trace and time its course. But first you must have a map. Take any map which has the whole Mississippi Valley on one page and mark on it in ink the station numbers which were given in the April number of the O. and O. I have found that the maps given in the front of a common railroad guide answer very well for the purpose. If you have difficulty in locating any of the stations go to your postmaster, his postal guide will tell you the county, which can then be found on any ordinary school map. Now if you have your prepared map at your elbow, we will begin with the Robin, (*M. migratoria*), since this is a home bird, one that all can observe and one for which all eagerly watch as the first signs of Spring appear.

During the Winter they were irregularly scattered over nearly all the country from the thirty-seventh parallel South, their scarcity or abundance seeming to depend on the food supply. No. (16) found them quite plentiful near the Tennessee River, at (26) only a few were seen; some late stragglers remained behind and were found at (36), while, owing to a bountiful supply of hackberries, countless numbers wintered at (22), as many as 1,000 being seen in a single mile.

From these Winter abodes a few began to pass slowly northward about the middle of February, reaching (32) on 2-9, and (30) on 2-22; then in the last few days of

February and the first days of March, these few suddenly scattered over an immense country. February 27 and 28 and March 1 were days with warmer weather and a south wind, and the robins evidently thought Spring was coming. These enterprising ones appeared at (37) 2-25 at (39) 2-28, at (42) the same day. The next day they turned up at (38), (40), (43) and a single forlorn individual managed to reach (52); by 3-3, one had been seen at Neenah, Wis., but they seemed to pass by (33), as the first one did not reach there until 3-6. No. (44) found them 3-5; (45) 3-13. Meanwhile (47) was wading through and rejoicing over two feet of snow, and Mr. Robin shunned him until 3-25, but greeted (58) 3-5, while (60) did not see them until nearly 4-1. I am sorry to say I have no observer in the extreme north of Minnesota, but from what I learned of the movements of the birds during three years residence there, I think it would take the first birds from nine to twelve days to go from (60) to the British line. Thus the birds which started in the middle of February took eight weeks to make the journey which their powers of flight would have easily enabled them to make in one. But so far we have considered only the first ones seen, which are almost always stragglers. The great army by no means keeps up with these advance guards. This Spring has been generally and thoroughly cold, and even as late as March 17th a cold snap in Arkansas was sending the Robins back in large numbers, though I suspect that these reappearances of birds, supposed to be gone, is to a large extent due to the

stopping over of birds, which, if it was not for the cold, would have passed unnoticed in the night.

The real migration at (26) commenced 3-1, but even at 3-21, they were still passing in large numbers. The immense numbers found during the Winter at (21) began to disappear in the middle of February, but the disappearance was quite gradual. On 3-12, 300 were seen in a single mile, but by 3-25 all had dispersed through the country and no more flocks were seen. At (30) small flocks began to come 3-4, but the principal migration was not until near the end of the month. No. (32) found ten large flocks 3-1, (38) found them quite numerous 3-9; (39) saw at 6 P. M. 3-23, a large flock going north. They were flying abreast in an extended line, as far east and west as the eye could reach, and at a height of 75 to 100 feet. At (52) after the first one 5-1, no more were seen until 3-14 and then only two, the first flock came 3-17, since then have been very slowly increasing, and seem now to be as plentiful as they ever will be, and the first comers are looking out nesting places.

After they get to northern Minnesota the main army follows fast on the track of its scouts and will reach British America from the 15th to the 20th of April. Let us wish them a safe journey, a pleasant Summer, and plenty of bugs; they will have mosquitoes enough anyhow, and hope to see them again next Fall.

When we take up the subject of Ducks and Geese we are met at the very outset by the great difficulty, that few observers can identify ten per cent. of the Ducks and Geese seen and so have to enter them without giving species. Moreover the larger part of the observers are kept by their business within or near city limits and cannot visit the watery haunts of these birds. In these notes I shall not attempt to separate into the several species, but treat altogether.

The larger part of both Ducks and Geese

Winter near the seacoast, but in the Mississippi Valley as far up as they can find open water, just so far they, that is some of the species, will stay, and their movement northward seems to be entirely dependent on the opening of the frozen waters or their expectation of finding them open. That their expectations are often not realized is a matter of common observation; and this brings up the query, whether, when birds are migrating during the night, they can see the ground at all over which they are flying; or at that height even in clear nights can distinguish frozen water from liquid. One would be tempted to say they could not, else why should they fly during the night miles beyond the last open water, only to return the next day?

(Continued next Month.)

Dr. Merriam's Return.

The following extract from a private letter will fully explain itself. The Doctor has been studying the Seal in its own home and where only its habits can be properly studied.

I have at last reached home, after an interesting though perilous voyage to the Arctic ice, where I collected 120 specimens of Seals, and much valuable information bearing upon their habits, migrations, and the industry known as the "Seal Fishery."
C. HART MERRIAM.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR. A female (*Centrophanes lapponicus*) was shot in this vicinity, Jan. 26, 1883, by Mr. Charles H. Neff. It was alone in a barren field.—*John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.*

BANDED-BACKED WOODPECKER. Among my rarities of February appear one pair, male and female, and one adult Glaucous Gull.—*E. S. Bowler, Bangor, Maine.*

LEWIS' WOODPECKERS. D. D. Stone reports shooting one pair of the above birds at Denver, Colorado, May 13, 1882. They were the only ones seen there by him during three seasons.

ARRIVALS. — Sunday morning, May 13, Baltimore Orioles, Cat-Birds, Bob-o-links and Yellow Warblers appeared at Dorchester, Mass.

Brief Ornithological Notes from Newfoundland.

Since contributions, however meagre, to the Natural History of little known regions are always valuable, I take pleasure in recording the following Ornithological items gathered during a recent visit to Newfoundland. There was not much snow on the Island last Winter, and patches of bare ground were visible early in March. When I left St. John's, on the 18th of April, most of the fields were entirely bare, and the signs of approaching Spring were unmistakable. Still, the early birds had not arrived in any numbers, and the only Spring migrants observed were the Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Purple Finch.

Robin (*Turdus migratoria*). First seen April 6th; common soon afterwards; singing.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*). A few were seen near the Government House, April 16th.

Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*). Found singing in the Balsam Poplars about the Government House, April 18th.

The Common or Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus albus*) is still an abundant resident, even in the vicinity of St. John's; and thousands of them are killed annually on the peninsula of Avalon alone. It frequents rocky barrens, feeding upon the seeds and berries of the stunted plants that thrive in these exposed situations. The Rock Ptarmigan (*L. rupestris*) is confined to the high mountains of the interior.

April 9th I saw a flock of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophanes nivalis*) in a stubble field near the outskirts of St. John's. Most of them were in the black-and-white Summer plumage.

The only bird seen in St. John's harbor from the 1st to the 10th of March was a solitary Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), here called "Saddle-back;" but during part of this time the harbor was covered with ice.

I left St. John's for the Seal "Fishery"

March 10th, being a guest (through the courtesy of Mr. John Syme) on board the fine steamship *Proteus*, which vessel, it will be remembered, took the Greely Colony to Lady Franklin Bay in 1881. In steaming northward in front of the bold rocky bluffs that face the sea along this part of the coast, the only birds noted were a few Sea Pigeons (*Uria grylle*) already in the black breeding garb, and a number of Guillemots (*Lomvia*—?). We entered the ice near the grand fortress-like island of Baccalieu, and during the following three weeks I did not see a bird of any description. On the return voyage, laden with upwards of fourteen thousand Hooded Seals, we emerged from the ice much farther to the north, and at daybreak on the morning of the first of April were in open water in sight of Cape Bonavista. From this point to St. John's the *Proteus* sailed amongst many hundreds of Guillemots, and numerous Gulls were seen from time to time throughout the day. Most of them were common Herring Gulls and Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*). I saw one "Saddle-back" (*L. marinus*) and several Ice Gulls (*L. glaucus*) together with a few others whose identity I was unable to determine. Besides these there were noticed some small, sharp-winged, gull-like birds that, in color and markings, strongly resembled Arctic Terns (*Sterna macrura*).

About the first of April a few Eider Ducks of both species (*Somateria mollissima*) and (*S. spectabilis*) were shot near St. John's; and on the 19th, when off the southern coast of Newfoundland, two or three immature Ring-billed Gulls (*L. Delawarensis*) were easily distinguished from the common species (*L. Argentatus*) that followed the steamship *Caspian*, on which vessel I was a passenger.—*C. Hart Merriam, M. D., Locust Grove, New York, May 1st, 1883.*

MOCKINGBIRDS. W. T. Hopkins, Savannah, Georgia, reports young Mockingbirds April 18th.

William MacGillivray.

In a previous number we gave some facts about the Birth, Death and Publications of the above ornithologist, who was a bosom friend and congenial companion to Audubon. It is generally well known that he wrote the scientific part of Audubon's "Birds of America." He did it for a consideration. He never claimed that he had done for Audubon what Audubon could not have done for himself had he had the time and the inclination. MacGillivray was, without question, the most thorough ornithologist this world has yet produced. He had a great dislike of "closet naturalists" that studied dry skins. He was thorough in his study of bird life; equally thorough when his specimen was shot. He gave as much attention to the internal structure of a bird as to the external feathering. He was equally happy hammering rocks, studying botany, fresh or salt water fish and shells. He made a large number of drawings of birds, fish, etc., mostly life-size, with a view of publishing, but for some reason they were never given to the public. He lived in the age of costly works, and no doubt it was considered too risky a venture after Audubon had produced his great work, and the works by Jardine and Selby, besides one or two editions of Wilson's works had been placed upon the market. It was no doubt discouraging to him to end up with a five volume 8vo work after preparing plates for a work as large as Audubon's double elephant folio. If his drawings were like one in our possession, it was certainly a loss the world will not soon make good. The specimen in question is a pair of Chaffinches on a double branch of horse chestnut. The time chosen is in the Spring when the birds were mating, and the horse chestnut putting out its leaves. It was drawn in May, 1831, and inscribed "to my esteemed friend, J. J. Audubon." As a specimen of ornithological and botanical drawing we

have never seen it equalled. The coloring is just as good to-day as it was fifty two years ago, and there is not a part of either birds, branch, or opening leaves, that will not stand the test of even the microscope. At the time the above drawing was made the world was actually overstocked with the rarest ornithological talent. From 1825 to 1845 was an era in ornithological discovery and the production of illustrated works on ornithology that will probably never be excelled.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.—A few years ago the query arose whether the female *Regulus calendula* had a red crest. The matter was apparently set at rest by Dr. Coues who stated that both sexes were thus adorned after the first year. I have asked several ornithologists regarding this matter and am unable to find any one who has seen a female thus decorated, though all seem inclined to consider the matter settled. I have taken quite a large number myself and fail to find any but males with crests. Will my fellow collectors use their opportunities this spring? Proof of this characteristic in a common species should rest with more than one witness.—*Fred. T. Jencks, Providence, R. I.*

An April Walk.

At 8 a. m., April 10, I started for a four hour's walk through field and wood to a Barred Owl's nest. Under an obscured sun, with a warm south wind, the conditions were favorable to activity among the feathered residents and to the arrival of Summer colonists. While dressing, the noise of trouble in the sparrow world drew me to the window in time to see a red squirrel go into a sparrow's hole in an elm, where I am glad to think he had a hearty breakfast on the eggs of this pest now rightly outlawed in our sister State of Massachusetts. Pass—*Passer domesticus!* Before reaching the street I noted a jay eating the buds of apple-trees and took

from our cat a male Goldfinch with plumage yellowing fast. In the elms overhead were Yellow-rumped Warblers, and high above all a flock of sixty-three Canada Geese were flying to the northeast. Have observers noted any significance in the size and abundance of the strings of geese in their altitude, and in the position and shape of the flying columns with reference to winds and safety? In the suburbs saw the first White-bellied Swallow. On the scattered wayside trees Nuthatches, Downies and Wacups were in great activity. In the old bird-books we used to read that Wacups bred in the middle of April; but nowadays the great body of Wacup's eggs are to be seen in June. Indeed, June is pre-eminently the month for the oologist. The eggs of all the species that breed here can be taken then except a few Raptores. I have even taken a second set of Woodcock, and all the Buteos the first month in Summer. The Hylas was hymning his delight at the warm clouds from most of the marshes, and his noise was only equalled by the Phœbe in fresh possession of every bridge, shed, and cliff in the country side. And this last fact has instilled new activity to the Cowbirds, who find among the Phœbes and Ground Birds the first receptacles for their eggs. It is common to find a Lazy-bird's egg in an unfinished Pewee's nest, many times causing the owner to desert it. So on this early stroll I saw two different sets of male Cowbirds in fierce pursuit of the females who seemed by no means coy. A trio of Downies were also trying to show that a possible pair beats three of a kind. The courtship of the Downies was especially interesting from the novel positions assumed on the ground and in bushes. While the males were fighting the female would rest crosswise on a twig, in the attitude of the Ruby-throat Hummer to the life.

Every wooded hillside and timbered swamp was ringing with the cry of the Red-shouldered Hawks who are extremely

noisy in early April or until the females are incubating. In the garden of a long deserted house in the woods I stopped a moment to dig some artichokes, and while enjoying their fresh earthy flavor a pair of large Buteos came into my range of vision *in flagrante delictu*. In some old English bird miscellany I recollect reading that this act among the Falconidæ (then including Hawks and Eagles) is consummated on the wing in mid-air, at incredible heights! But here an apple tree was the lowly theatre of action. The owl's eggs were secured without difficulty, the male birds covering the eggs and showing more solicitude than the females had shown on former visits. When the Barred Owl is startled from its hole, it may at first fly against limbs or other obstructions, but in a few seconds its sight is keen enough. It generally alights on a tree a few rods away, and then by an odd jump and twist faces about to look at the scene of danger before again taking flight wholly out of range. Returning from my walk the sun came out hot from the clouds, the frogs stopped their music, and the first black snake was seen crawling from its den to note the Spring arrivals and to be on time for his share of eggs.—*J. M. W., Norwich, Ct.*

COE'S STRAIN OF OWLS.—W. W. Coe, Portland, Conn., has again opened the season, but we will let him tell his own story, for he does it so well even if he is a little tantalizing. He writes: "At my right hand, on the billiard table in a cigar box, half full of cotton, I see two Great-horned Owls' eggs—beauties—fresh—clean—taken from an old Red-tailed Hawk's nest, in a big chestnut sixty feet from the ground, at 2.30 p. m. this day. Whoop-la! Why don't you get up some morning and open the season? Let's see—my first record is March 2, 1872; this last, March 4, 1883, eleven years without a break. I engaged another set from the old gal, to be ready about the first of April.

[How about the white owl?—ED.]

Cardinal Grosbeak.

My attention was called by Mr. Small's article in the February number of *O. and O.* to the difference between his experience and mine in regard to time of nesting of the Cardinal Grosbeak. He says "they are among our latest breeders, first sets being found about the 1st of June," while I regard this as one of the first species to be looked after, excepting the Rapacia.

I found three incomplete sets on April 21st, 1878, and a set of four eggs partly incubated, on April 28th of the same year, and have since had similar experience. I formerly thought, like Mr. Small, that the Redbird was a late breeder and was much surprised when I found my first April set. June sets I now regard as second sets of the season. I have found the nest in quite a variety of situations, sometimes in currant bushes or other shrubbery of the garden or lawn, but most frequently in the crotch of a thorn-bush or small tree in thickety woods. I knew of one built last season in a grapevine which was trained against the side of a house, almost in the very centre of the town and surrounded on three sides by brick walls. They were not allowed to hold peaceable possession here, however, for the place was a veritable den of House Sparrows, and either they or the cats broke up the Redbird's nest.—*W. T. Warrick, Washington, Pa.*

Humane.

"Man's inhumanity to man made countless millions mourn," but what of man's inhumanity to dumb animals that cannot even protest. Let each one examine his own record and see if some improvement in this respect cannot be made. We like to read the works of the eccentric Webber; he had a kind heart. When his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, asked him to shoot her a Mockingbird before she could complete the drawing of that bird, he hesitated. When she told him he

must get her one he replied, "I would rather meet a Panther on the bound, but if it must be done, I will do it." But his heart failed him and he could not pull the trigger. A collector can hardly stop to study the humane side of the question, and yet some do, and we get some letters which show this noble trait in man fully developed. We make the following extract from a letter of this kind:

"While I have devoted a great deal of time to finding birds' nests and studying the habits of birds, I somehow have so strong an aversion to taking the eggs of small birds that, although the partaker is as bad as the thief, I prefer to buy sets of most kinds to taking them. After I have watched a bird and she has taken me into her confidence, as it were, I cannot help thinking I have been doing a rather mean thing to rob her; and though I have done it, and would in no case censure others, still there is not half the pleasure in robbing them there is in finding the nests and leaving the old birds in possession. I have got a Warbler so used to me as to take her into my hand from the nest, and she almost immediately returns to it when liberated.

"I have the same repugnance to shooting small birds and have bought most of my Warblers, etc., and mounted from skins. I still lack a common Chipping Sparrow in my collection, though for two years past a pair have built within three feet of the knob of my bird house door and my elbow almost touches her as I open the door, while I work on birds in Summer weather with the door open, the female often sits on a lattice and peeps in inquisitively to see what all those large birds are in there for."

While fully endorsing these sentiments we recognize the right of all to collect at will eggs or birds, and science demands that collections shall be made; but we earnestly ask all collectors to be *humane* about it. Do not take a bird or an egg unless good use is to be made of it; do not kill wantonly; do not take a nest unless there is a full set, and you need it for self or friend; never shoot a bird for wanton sport.

Crows Eating Herons' Eggs.

About ten pairs of Night Herons (*Nycticorax grisea*), and three pair of Little Blue Herons, (*Ardea coerulea*), have nested for a few years within the corporate limits of the city of New Brunswick, N. J. When I visited this heronry, late in April, '82, I discovered that one nest already contained four eggs, two others each three, several more one and two, while the re-

mainder were as yet empty. About two weeks later, after climbing up to a number of nests, and passing from the top of one tree to another, where this was practicable, thus examining nearly all, I was surprised to find each empty, though the old birds fluttered overhead or alighted near by. At the base of many of the trees in which nests were situated lay the eggs with a piece broken out and the meat gone. I suspected two parties of the robbery—either the Red Squirrel, (*Sciurus hudsonius*,) that I saw some distance away, or else a number of Crows that were perched in a neighboring tree cawing lustily. On May 20th I examined the nests a third time, finding them again without eggs, while fresh shells were strewn on the ground. The Herons were now shy and restless, whereas the Crows, for whom I entertained a strong aversion, were more audacious and clamorous than ever. A subsequent and final visit revealed conditions unchanged, the Crows as officious as ever, so that, it being very late in the season, I was satisfied that no young birds were reared last year. I fear the Herons will remove to some other breeding ground the coming Spring, a proceeding which I should very much regret.—*A. G. Van Aken, New Brunswick, N. J.*

RARE BOOKS. Since our last we have added Thomas Pennant's Arctic Zoology, in two volumes. A very rare work. We have also secured in England a copy of Alex. Wilson's Poems, 1790 edition, which is very rare. It is a small 8 vo., and the price is \$6. We have sold a duplicate copy of Thomas Nuttall's works, in two volumes, 1832 and 1840 edition, a fine copy, price \$30, to Mr. Chamberlain, Saint John, N. B.

SOUTHWICKS & JENCKS CATALOGUES. This firm have got out a series of catalogues for the collector that have never been equaled. The one devoted to Birds and Eggs is a production of great labor and skill. Every collector should have it.

Lesser Red Poll.

This bird is a common Winter visitor, arriving in November and remaining usually until the middle or last of March. To-day, April 14th, I shot one, the latest I have known them to remain. The last of March, 1878, I was fortunate enough to find the nest and eggs of this species. The nest, now before me, is composed of fine dry twigs, dried grasses, fine strips of fibrous bark, bits of twine, hair, fibrous roots, moss, dried leaves, pieces of cocoons, feathers, thistle down, and other material, which is neatly woven together into a compact structure and lined with hair. It was placed very loosely among the top branches of a small spruce, about six feet from the ground, and contained three fresh eggs of a very pale bluish green color, sparingly marked with spots and splashes of different shades of brown at the larger end. Dimensions, .72×.48, .72×.47, .71×.48.—*C. O. Tracy, Taftsville, Vt.*

[We kept one of these birds in a cage for two seasons. It made a good cage bird, but was very restless in the evening until midnight during the Spring and Fall migration, and had a peculiar call during the night. It remained perfectly healthy. When changing its seed, it flew through the hole in the wires and went out the back door. Almost immediately we went out at the front door, and while watching the fountain play, noticed what appeared to be a bird in the water. On removing it, it proved to be the Lesser Red Poll. The bright sun and the fountain spray lured the little Northern bird to its destruction.—ED.]

STORMY PETREL (*Thalassidroma pelagica*) was shot on the Connecticut River, opposite Springfield, Mass., a few years ago. The specimen is about six inches long, its plumage, rusty black, except back of the thighs and above the tail, which is of white. The upper mandible is long and terminates with a short hooked nail. The wings resemble the swallows and are large for the bird. The feet are small, anterior toes webbed, hind toe only a claw. The oily nature of the bird is very noticeable in this specimen. Before it was skinned its presence was very perceptible by the smell, reminding one of an old-fashioned oil lamp.—*O. B. Deane.*

Climbers and Climbing.

This subject received some attention in our columns but was dropped too soon, as there was much more that might have been said in the way of a proper outfit and how to use it. If we ever get time, we may have something further to say on this subject. At present we desire to call attention to a new fire escape, invented by Mr. A. P. Sturtevant, of Norwich. It is very cheap, portable, and will enable the collector to climb the largest tree with certainty, safety, and quickly. It consists of a cotton rope and a belt to strap around the body. A small twine, with a weight at one end, could be used to throw over the desired limb, when the rope could be pulled over the limb, when in one minute's time the nest, if near the limb, could be reached, and the eggs safely brought to the ground. No climbing irons are used and no danger attends the operation, if proper caution is used.

OSPREYS' EGGS. In your October issue appear some notes on number of eggs laid by Ospreys, and it has occurred to me to ask if the number in a clutch influences the size of the eggs. The clutch of four mentioned as having been sent to England by Mr. Worthington is in my collection, and the eggs measure as follows: 2.26×1.75 , 2.31×1.75 , 2.28×1.8 , 2.27×1.76 . A clutch of two, received from the same gentleman, measured 2.42×1.81 , 2.43×1.79 ; and a clutch of three collected by Mr. Griffing, and sent to me by Mr. Snowdon Howland, measure 2.5×1.82 , 2.5×1.86 , 2.56×1.83 . If at any time I can answer, for any of your readers, questions relating to Birds of the British fauna which appear in your lists as accidental visitors, it will give me great pleasure to do so.—*W. Wells Bladen, Stone, Staffordshire, England.*

TEQUIXQUIACATZANATL is one of the names given to our Purple Grackle in Pennant's Arctic Zoology.

AN ICY NEST. April 3, saw the first House Phoebe and took my first Barred Owl's egg—the double event being quite ten days late. This owl's hole of ancient domain is barrel-shaped and now open at the top, and on the 24th of March there was such a heavy slab of solid ice in the bottom that for one year at least it seemed as if the tenant must secure quarters elsewhere. But, April 3, I took the first egg, substituting a hen's egg for the rest of the clutch which can be safely reckoned upon. Except a dab of wet feathers the egg was in the middle of the slab of ice which had begun to melt very slightly under the heat of the owl's body. We read of strange nesting-places, and queer material used in construction, but isn't this the first instance of a collector finding his eggs on ice?—*J. M. W., Norwich, Conn.*

WOODPECKERS, SNOW BIRDS, JAYS, CREEPERS or Sap Suckers, and a very few Quail have been seen. Quail have died by the thousands further up North. Prairie chickens have scarcely been seen since December last, and the inference is they have frozen also. I saw tracks of a grouse the other day. Thermometer much of the time twenty to forty-two degrees below zero, and mean temperature of January six below. But 'tis a clear, beautiful atmosphere and we look for early Spring.—*Rev. Geo. B. Pratt, Hastings, Minnesota.*

PURPLE FINCHES. C. C. Richards, Norwich, Conn., reports eight pairs of Purple Finches feeding on the seeds of the tulip poplar, eating only the base or the part containing the seed. He noticed them frequently and, at times, feeding with House Sparrows.

IPSWICH SPARROW. I noticed in March O. and O. that Mr. Griffing took three *Passerculus princeps* in November last near Shelter Island, L. I. I have taken eight out of ten I have seen on Great South Beach, Long Island, since Jan. 1, 1883.—*Wm. Dutcher, 304 Second-avenue, New York, March 2d.*

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VOL. VIII.

BOSTON, JULY, 1883.

No. 7.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NEW OBSERVERS AND STATIONS.

- No. 2. Florida., Royallieuw, T. S. RISLEY.
" 34. Indiana, Delphi, B. W. EVERMAN.
" 42. Illinois, Griggsville, T. W. PARKER.
" 48. Iowa, Des Moines, U. S. Grant.
" 56. Minnesota, Pine Bend, ROBERT LINTON.

[Continued from last month.]

As near as I can tell from the notes of various writers and my own observations, nearly all their movements would fall under these three rules: If, when flying north they meet a cold, freezing storm, they are most apt to return without attempting to alight; if they go beyond the boundary of open water they will return; but if they find open water and once settle on it they will stay there no matter how cold and freezing the weather afterwards becomes; even if it is so cold that the water freezes over again the chances are that they will disperse over the fields and wait there for another thaw.

The farthest north I find Geese to have wintered is at (42), where a few stayed all winter in the airholes in the Illinois River near Valley City. The Mallards wintered in large numbers at (21), and at (35) a dozen different kinds and geese also found a congenial winter home. (35) sends an interesting note concerning the winter food of the Mallard. He says: "They are the most common Duck we have, arriving here as a winter visitor shortly after the first frost and remaining until about the first of April, but this year until about the middle of the month. Feeds on wild rice, when obtainable, and their next choice seems to be acorns with which they will sometimes fill their crops so full as to cause

them to extend half way to their heads."

The following selected notes will give a pretty accurate idea of the time of the general northward movement of the Ducks, although of course there were many minor and local irregularities. At (16) they began to fly 2-1. (22) 2-9 began flying today, after the warm rain. (30) 2-14 the first were seen in the afternoon. 2-15 at 11 A. M. commenced again, and from 4 to 5 P. M. twenty-eight large flocks passed north. 2-16 from 7 to 8 A. M. fifty flocks with over 2,000 individuals passed over. 2-17—24 quite plentiful all the week, but no great move until 2-24, when in the forenoon, with a light rain and warm strong south wind, large flocks went north, abruptly stopped at noon by a norther. 3-14 quite plentiful, and 3-18 large flocks going north. (42) 3-13 not first, but are in innumerable quantities on the Illinois River bottoms. 3-14 clouds of Ducks, some Mallard, Wood Duck and Teal, but principally Sprigtail. (37) 3-16 very plenty. (38) 2-16 first seen. (40) 3-1 first. 3-19 flying south but returned 3-21. (44) 3-14 very numerous. 3-18 in the morning flying north and at noon hastening back. (47) 3 12 first seen and were Teal. 3-25 plenty. 4-5 and 4-6 the Ducks seemed to fairly swarm on the prairies and in the cornfields, but by 4-8 they were mostly gone. (52) on 3-1, a lone duck appeared and skated awhile on the ice of a neighboring lake, but his report was so unsatisfactory that the rest were slow in coming. Even when the ice went out of the river 4-2 there were still very few, and it was not until 4-5 that the gunners began to make

a business of their slaughter. 4-7 and 4-8 during a snow storm was the harvest time, and by 4-11 most had passed on. (57) 3-24 was the day of the first, when five or six flocks settled on a lake near by. (60) no Ducks reached here until 4-3, but as the ice was then two feet thick it is no wonder.

Of the movements of Geese I will give merely some condensed notes. (16) began to fly 1-15 and ceased 2-20. (30) 2-15 first. 2-24 several troops seen. 3-18 large flocks. (42) 3-24 shot first; saw fifty Brant in morning and 300 to 400 in afternoon. (33) 3-21 last night Geese were heard all night going north. (37) 2-17 first. 3-16 plenty both Geese and Brant. (38) 2-16 first. (40) 3-19 flying south but returning 3-21. (43) 3-1 first. (44) 3-5 first. 3-14 a great many. 3-18 flying both north and south, according to wind. (47) 3-12 first. 3-25 the bulk came, and on 4-5 and 4-6 on prairies and in cornfields the Geese, Brant, and Swans were in swarms. Two days later most had gone. (52) 3-14 first. Only a few in their migrations pass over this part of the country. (60) 4-7 were the first and then only three.

I append the following interesting account by (30) of the flight of Geese. "3-14. It was a grand sight to see an army of northbound Snow Geese go by with much noise in the forenoon. At first came about 500 in one cloud, but divided in fifteen loose files. After a few minutes came another army of about 150 in five files. Among all these were only eight wholly white Geese, but many with white head and neck; the rest were darker birds. They flew about 300 feet high. At the same time passed a troop of 30-40 Canada Geese. The files of these two kinds of Geese are different. The ranks of the Canada Geese make quite a sharp pointed angle, while the angle of the Snow Geese is quite obtuse, and the birds often throw the body from one side to the other; their flight also seems to be more rapid and Duck-like."

Of the Blackbirds the only one we will

take up for the present is the Red winged *Agelaius phoeniceus*. His Winter home does not differ much from the Robin's but is somewhat farther South, and is restricted to the peculiar kind of country which they always choose, i. e. swampy lowlands. Wherever they do occur in winter it is in innumerable quantities. Some few straggling flocks pass the winter farther north, but only a few and these usually only in mild winters. The larger flocks pass north to breed, but some scattered ones remain to rear their young, all the way from the Gulf to the British line. No. (13) finds them present 4-26 and marks them as resident, while (6) finds them breeding 4 25. The appearance of the first ones in the spring is quite irregular, and any notes on the first seen are of comparatively little value, because, unless the observer goes out in particular search of them, they will not be seen until several days after their arrival. The bulk moves quite regularly, and I think a full record of the movements of the females would show that they go quite regularly north. In general the height of the season is about the time the females arrive. The following is the record:

No. (16) found them as a Winter resident in countless numbers. (35) arrived from south 2-20 to 2-28 and 4-8 are still going through in flocks. (30) 3-3 many small flocks in the swamps of Illinois, just opposite St. Louis, but none here yet. 3-11 have spread a little more in small troops, mostly males. 3-14 were the most conspicuous birds in the lowlands. Vast numbers were in noisy flocks, with but few females. 3-17 large flocks go north above the river. 4-4 the number was very great, but 4-6 was the height of the season. 4-19. females in flocks. (21) 3-12 first. 4-29 last migrant has left and all our Blackbirds have settled down to their summer's work. (42) 3 6 first; increasing very slowly, but 3-17 saw two large flocks and 3-18 still more. (33) 3-7 first. (37) 3-18 first. 4-9 very numerous; quantities along the water

courses. (38) 2-25 first seen and were both male and female. The bulk came 3-3. (39) a few were seen here every month this winter. (40) 2-27 first seen. 3-1 saw about 100. 4-1 only fifteen in four miles. 4-7 surrounded with blackbirds. Thousands of them in flocks settled all over the edges of the timber. (43) some all winter. Let me insert here an experience I had with Blackbirds, April 6, 1878, within a few miles of where (43) lives. I had occasion to be down on what is known as "Muscatine Island," rather early in the morning. At a little before four o'clock the Black birds began to fly from a large forest on the west of the railroad track, across a wide marsh to the woods and marshes on the east. They were in flocks, but so close together that there appeared to be no break in the line of a mile in length, which extended from woods to woods. This line remained unbroken and remarkably constant in size for *six hours*, when about ten o'clock gaps began to appear and soon the flight ceased. Now taking the moderate estimate that 2,000 were in sight all the time, and that their speed was twenty-five miles per hour, we have the enormous sum total of 300,000 birds that were then living in that single marsh. Exactly five years later (43) finds the same state of affairs. He says "4-6, can't say how many are here now, as they have been roosting by thousands in the timber on Muscatine Island for a month or more. They commence passing over our village about day-break, and seldom all pass before nine or ten o'clock. About five in the afternoon they commence their return flight, and are often until late at night in getting in." (44) 4-3 large flocks. (47) 3-12 first. (52) 3-17 first, nine birds seen. 3-23 first flock. No more flocks seen until 4-4, when in the evening about 250 birds went north. Even by 4-9 very few seemed to have passed north, and a walk of half a dozen miles would not have revealed as many flocks. 4-12 for the first time common. No large

flocks, but a good many scattered single ones and small parties, all singing and all males. 4-21 first females. 4-28 height of season. (56) 4-11 first. (57) 4-14 first one. (60) 4-5 first one seen and only one. 4-7 only four seen in three miles.

Since last month's notes were written a large number of additional notes have come to hand, and to make the record more complete the following items are added in regard to the movements of the Robins; At (16) almost all had left by 3-1. No. (35) says that although the Robins winter here in far greater numbers than breed here, yet they will sometimes disappear for a week or two at a time. They confine themselves mostly to the bottom lands where their favorite winter food, wild grapes, is to be found in abundance throughout the winter. In the hills they are occasionally found eating sumac berries. Sometimes days were passed in the woods without seeing a single specimen, while again thousands would be met with in a single flock. From 2-20 to 2-28 immense flocks came from the south and remained here until the latter part of March, when they began to move on. No. (30) heard distinctly at 9.30 P. M., 4-3, the voices of wandering Robins flying over the city, and wherever he went on 4-4 there were Robins. He gives 4-4 as "height of the season," i. e. as numerous as they ever will be for the "transient visitors," which are those that merely pass through to nest further north. Robins must be quite numerous at all times at (21) for he found fifty in five miles on 4-7, after the transient had all left. The record of (37) is that after the first one 2-25, they increased very slowly and during the cold snap of 3-4 almost disappeared, came back again 3-8 to 3-10 and on 3-18 were not arriving fast, only eight to ten seen in two miles. April 9th was the height of the season. Through northern Iowa the bulk seemed to move 4-7 to 4-9. No. (45) first was seen 3-13, very scarce for next two weeks; on 4-1 only two

in three hours; 4-9 very numerous. At (40) first flock 3-19; on 4-1 only six in one mile, but 4-7 very large flocks. At (52) only one large flock has been seen this spring and that was 4-7. The most song was heard 4-12, when single ones and pairs were everywhere, but by 4-14 the last transient had left. On 4-27 the first egg was taken. No. (56) says his first was seen 3-27; while (57) saw his first 3-13, two miles from town near straw pile, with a little bare ground around it. All the ground except a few small spots was covered deep with snow. The next day he found the same one with two others at the same locality, but they were very scarce until 4-6, when a large flock of forty were seen, and very soon after that they began mating.

Passing on now to the Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*.) we have somewhat near the same story to tell. This bird is a trifle more hardy than the Robin, and its winter quarters average a little farther north; but, unlike the Robin, it is scattered pretty evenly over all the country it inhabits, as if it could easily make a living anywhere. We may put down thirty-nine degrees as about the limits of the stragglers during the winter, but thirty-eight degrees would be more nearly the normal limit of its winter home. Of its winter habits (35) says that it is sometimes absent for a week or so, but is likely to be met with any week during the winter, and in far greater numbers than in the summer months. When the ground is soft, large numbers of them may be found in meadows picking around the roots of grass, as if searching for hidden insects; they also eat sumac berries.

The bulk of them seem to have started from their winter homes about the middle of February, and from the last of February to the middle of March were very numerous between the thirty-seventh and thirty-ninth parallels. No. (16) found sixty-three to the mile on 3-5; (22) saw seventy-five to the mile 3-12; (38) thinks the bulk of their birds came about 3-1; and (30) says

that their great arrivals were about 2-24, when half their birds had come back, both in pairs and pairing; and 3-4 he says, "Bluebirds were the birds of this week. They were seen and heard everywhere; the males doing most of the warbling and the females most of the fighting. I caught two females in my hands which came down to the ground in combat. One had an eye badly closed. Before liberating I gave each a tinge of aniline on the chin for future reference."

Large flocks of Bluebirds are not much seen north of southern Iowa. By the time they reach Iowa and central Illinois so many of them have paired, and the rest are so seriously contemplating that important step, that more than four or six will seldom be seen at once. The following dates of the first ones seen show a progression northward quite regular in its motion; the only exception being (56) who is on a high bleak prairie, and it is natural that they should not appear until some time after they had appeared at (57) who is in timber right on the bank of the Mississippi. No. (32) first one seen 2-7; (42) 2-21. On 2-28 were more numerous and showed signs of pairing. (37) 2-28, not many until 3-8. (38) 2-17; bulk came 3-1. (39) 2-28. (40) 2-28. (43) 3-1. (44) 3-1. Bulk came 3-14 and some took possession of the bird house and went to housekeeping in earnest. (45) 3-20 but very few first week. (47) 3-12, snow two feet on a level. Bulk came 3-25. (52) 3-11. Seemed inclined to become common on 3-17, but sudden cold weather put a complete stop to all migration from then to 3-23, since which time they are about as they will be all summer. (56) 4-1. (57) 3-14. (60) 4-5, a pair came back and are singing on an old nest.

No. (60) is very near the northern limit of the Bluebird's range, which is usually given as 48 degrees. It really does sometimes go beyond that, even to the British line; but from (60) northward it is rather a rare bird. At about 47 degrees I usually saw

only half a dozen pairs in a whole summer, and their movements can no longer be depended on. Last year I was constantly in the field, but did not see one until six weeks after they reached a point only a hundred miles south of me.

Plain English.

The title of this article, as well as the thoughts which follow, were suggested by the prospectus of this Magazine.

Thought one is, that the O. and O. ought to be well supported, by the amateurs of the fraternity at least, because the articles which appear in it are not to be so crowded with technicalities as to weary the reader but are to be written in what the *literati* call the "popular style," in the language of the people rather than in the language of science, or in other words they are to be written in "Plain English."

And there is excellent authority and precedent to warrant the hearty endorsement of such a policy, for not only have eminent scientific men of the present day written many popular works, but a century ago the importance of a modification of technical writing was recognized, and that illustrious naturalist, Baron Cuvier, placed in the preface to *Le Règne Animal* the words, "I have not employed many technical terms, and have endeavored to communicate my ideas without that barbarous array of fictitious words, which in the works of many natural historians, is so very repulsive." As Agassiz, in his work on classification, has styled Cuvier "the greatest zoologist of all time," surely American students cannot justly be stigmatized as unscientific if they follow the Baron's teaching, or, even if, guided by the requirements of their day, and by the experience gained in the years intervening since he wrote, they carry his idea to a greater length than did the master himself.

And the question of the style to be adopted in writing scientific works ceases to a trifling matter, and demands earnest

attention, when it is considered that against this language of science must be laid the charge of causing the study of Natural History to be unpopular, for it would be folly to deny the fact that it is unpopular, that in the minds of those who enjoy wholesome and instructive books, but who are not especially interested in scientific research, there is a strong antipathy to works treating of natural science. And this antipathy is more real than apparent, even among those who are termed amateur scientists, who study a branch of science for the pleasure derived from it or for a relaxation from more engrossing labor. These are obliged, in order to keep informed of the latest discoveries, to read the determinations of the leading observers in their chosen departments, but it is in much the same spirit as that with which they submit to the manipulations of a dentist, that they worry through the tedious pages filled with unattractive and often obscure sentences, and with Latin and Greek terms and names which are hard to spell, hard to pronounce, hard to remember, and harder still to understand.

If our novels were written in such a style that they necessitated a continuous reference to Lexicons and Dictionaries, we should not read many; and science can relate to us stories which are equally as fascinating as those of Fiction—all the more fascinating because true; and scientific works could be written quite as easily and with as exact precision without the constant use of these technicalities, the great mass of them being as useless as they are repellant. The plea that technical writing cannot be dispensed with is an absurdity, a mere pretence, for this language of science is a sham of the most pronounced type, of a piece with the "formulas of Beadledom" and the "quackery" against which the pen of Carlyle waged war so mercilessly; the only purpose its use achieves is to throw over science that veil of mystery which is so dear to the heart of

the *savant*, and beneath which he delights to pose as the custodian of a knowledge too profound for ordinary mortals to comprehend.

This love of appearing possessed with super-human capabilities is no new development; it is as old as the human heart and has asserted itself under all the diverse phases of man's existence. It was the inspiring motive of the Sorcerers and Astrologers—the wise men of Bible days—and guided the founders of the religious systems of all savage races. It flourished amidst the mystic philosophy of Egyptian symbolism and drew vigor from the warm breast of the *Collegia Artificum*, founded by King Numa for the Romans; and it still lives, in the height of its arrogant presumption, not only beneath the shadow of barbaric priestcraft but in the broad light of the nineteenth century's civilization and culture.

But the intelligence of this age has no faith in the oracles or the mysticism which swayed such power in the darker ages of history; such mummeries have no place in the economy of a people who have ceased to believe that the knowledge attained by the few cannot be understood by the many; and the practical common sense of to-day declares that if the *savant* has a mission it clearly is to teach the people how they may read the sermons which are written in the stones; how they may gather the thoughts which are voiced by the running brooks, how they may discern the true and the beautiful—the good, which a beneficent Creator has implanted in everything, And unless the *savant* does his part in the fulfilment of this mission, unless he helps to make the world wiser and better, he is of no more use here than—a dead rat.

It would be base ingratitude not to admit frankly that the world owes much—very much, of its present advanced condition to the efforts of men of science. That they have done a great work in the education of the people is most true, but that

there is vastly more yet undone is equally as certain, and it will not be done, and the responsibility for the failure must fall upon scientists so long as they expend their best efforts for the sole benefit of their co-laborers—the small body of specialists, so long as they make their books repulsive to the people.

Considering all these things the amateur ornithologists should rejoice that for one year more, at least, the antiquated rubbish which was imposed upon science by a childish vanity shall be discarded from these pages, and the annals of the bird's lives be recorded here in "Plain English."—*Montague Chamberlain, St. John, N. B.*

Bewick's Wren.

May 17, 1882, I found a nest of Bewick's Wren containing four eggs. May 8th, of the present year, I found two nests of this wren, one containing four and the other six eggs. The set of four were partly incubated. The nest of '82 was in a mortise hole in an old barn in the southern part of this State. The two found yesterday were in the central section of this State. One was upon the rafter of a porch, the other upon the top of a window of a wood-shed. All three nests are very similar, being open at the top and lined with feathers. I caught with my hand two of the birds before they could leave their nests, and examined them carefully. The nest of '82 is figured in part 14 of "Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio," and is the first record of the nesting of this species in this State. The two specimens taken yesterday thoroughly establishes this wren as an Ohio summer resident. I believe Bewick's Wren is somewhat common in some localities, and is confounded by the country people with the common House Wren. I can recall a set of eggs which I took about twelve years ago, that I now believe were those of Bewick's Wren.—*Howard Jones, Circleville, Ohio.*

Sharp-shinned Hawk.**Red-headed Woodpecker.****House Sparrow.**

On May 18th I found a nest of the "Sharp-shinned Hawk." It was built in a hole of a dead tree in an open lot; and in the same tree, directly below it, a Red-headed Woodpecker had her nest. One week previous, when I discovered the Woodpecker's nest, I saw a small Hawk alight on the top of the tree for a few moments and then fly away again. Presently she returned and then flew away. This she repeated for several times. I thought of course she was after the Woodpecker. I then went away, thinking nothing more about it. The next day I happened to pass by there and I found that somebody had been trying to cut down the tree and had almost accomplished it. (They were probably after the Woodpecker's nest.) But while I was looking at it the same Hawk perched on the top of the tree. Then I thought she might have a nest there; I looked for it but could not find it. I did not visit the tree again until the morning of the 18th of May, when I went for the Woodpecker's eggs. This time I found the tree had been set on fire since my last visit, making it quite dirty work ascending. When I had almost reached the Woodpecker's nest, I saw something fly out of the hole above me. I then climbed up to the hole, which was about the size of a hat. There I saw the nest of the very Hawk which I had seen before, with four fresh eggs in it. The nest was just a few sticks thrown loosely in the hole. Is not this a singular place for a Sharp-shinned Hawk's nest? Is it not strange she has not deserted it when two attempts had been made to knock the tree down? Last year I found a House Sparrow's nest with four eggs, two of which were speckled all over; the third was almost destitute of spots, and the fourth was pure white. This is the second with white eggs. I have quite a number of

Phœbe birds nests having eggs speckled with red.

Will somebody be kind enough to tell me something about the eggs and breeding habits of the Canada Jay?—*W. B. Fonda, Morristown, N. J.*

BIRDS IN CONFINEMENT. I have added to my aviary since I last wrote a very odd specimen of the Catbird family. It has a broad band of white across the tail, about an inch from its tip. There is also one white feather in the right wing. Otherwise, *Mimus* is no different from others of his race. But you have no idea what a peculiar appearance that white stripe gives him, especially when his tail is fully spread. Have you ever met with a like specimen? I found him in the store of a Fourth-avenue dealer in New York, who told me he was an unusually fine singer; but he has not yet favored me with a song. I have also a Myrtle Bird (*Dendroica coronata*), a charming little fellow; and a Chewink (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) among my native birds. I trust the coming Spring will add many more to my list.—*Annie Trumbull Slosson, Hartford.*

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK. "Jack" is now in his fifth year and begins to show his age. He has sung more or less since January 1st, but not his full notes until into April. He still sings the full notes of the Indigo Bird and also the Canary, which he has not seen or heard for four years. Last Summer a pair of Wrens raised one nest of young in a box near him, and he has their notes complete. In the moult, commenced the middle of last August, he shed every tail and wing feather which we preserved. In his December and January moult he did not shed a single long feather. In January, February, March and April of each year, he will go through the most remarkable capers imaginable with the lady that cares for him.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK. T. J. Rigney saw a male at Pittsfield, Mass., May 19, '83.

CURIOUS NESTING PLACE. This day, June 11, while on a visit to the mills at Lawrence, Mass., we noticed a nest inside of the depot gong. The gong is about twelve inches in diameter and about an inch and a quarter from the wall. Three years ago a pair of House Sparrows built two or three nests in this gong, but they were pulled out by the baggage master, as they deadened the sound of the gong. This year they have built four nests. The third one filled the entire gong except an entrance hole, and the female laid a full set of eggs and had commenced sitting, and would not leave her nest on the inside of the gong when it was struck for departing trains. That nest and eggs was pulled out and would fill a peck measure. After this the gong was covered with a wire netting, except a place for the hammer to lift up, and through this small hole they have built their fourth nest this year. Now that the gong is covered with netting they are content with a small nest, seeming to know that it is a protection.

An Unrecorded Habit of the Red-Headed Woodpecker.

Several years ago my attention was called by a farmer to a singular habit which the Red-headed Woodpeckers in his neighborhood had of robbing the nests of Cliff Swallows. Since then I have collected numerous instances of the kind.

The following incident I believe to be true: Under the eaves of a large barn near Mt. Sterling, O., a colony of Cliff Swallows have built for some years. Last year they were nearly exterminated by several Woodpeckers. The Red-heads would alight at the doors of the mud huts and extract the eggs from the nests with their bills. In some nests the necks or entrance-ways were so long that the Woodpeckers could not reach the eggs by this means, but not willing to be cheated of such choice food they would climb around to the side, and with a few well di-

rected blows of their bills make openings large enough to enable them to procure the eggs. Of the dozens of nests built not a single brood was reared in any. One Woodpecker bolder than the rest began eating hen's eggs wherever they could be found. One morning the lady of the house saw a woodpecker go into a barrel in which she had a sitting of selected hen's eggs. Suspecting his purpose she hastened out and found that he had already broken one egg. The hen was off feeding. Presently the hen returned. Thinking all now safe the lady was about to enter the house when a Woodpecker alighted upon the barrel, and hopping around the top, soon entered. The lady hastened to the barrel and threw her apron over the top and captured the thief.

From my own observations and those of others, the Red-headed Woodpecker, (*M. erythrocephalus*,) must be placed among the egg-sucking birds.—*Howard Jones, Circleville, Ohio.*

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. Noticing Mr. Jencks' query in the June number of the O. and O., I write to say that the female Ruby-crowned Kinglet does occasionally have a well-marked crown-patch. I know of three such specimens, at least two of which were dissected by a competent person. In all three, however, the color of the bright feathers is orange, not scarlet as with the male. During my own collecting I have never taken a female which had the crown otherwise than perfectly plain, and it is certain that this condition is the normal one, even among fully adult birds. Hence Mr. Jencks' note may be taken in the main as a timely correction of a long established error.—*Wm. Brewster, Cambridge, Mass.*

INDEX to Vol. VII is now ready and will be mailed with this number to all who have remitted twelve cents.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK.—**JAS. J. MCCARTHY** caught a male with bird lime in the suburbs of Boston, June 11, '83.

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BOSTON, AUGUST, 1883.

No. 8.

A Reply to Dr. Coues.

To the Editor of the Quebec Morning Chronicle.

Dear Sir: In your issue of the 4th inst., Dr. Coues attempts to "correct a misapprehension respecting some points" raised in my review of "New England Bird Life," but his effort lacks one essential element of success—there was no misapprehension to correct.

I was well aware that the cuts of the Great-horned Owl and Snowy Owl were "copied from Audubon's famous folio engravings," although no mention was made of this in the book; but Dr. Coues has a way of using copies from Audubon's engravings, and from others, without acknowledging the source of their origin. He admits that these cuts are "not particularly good," and I submit, that the fact of their having been drawn by the great naturalist is not, of itself, evidence that they were not drawn from badly mounted specimens.

In my review I did not mention that these were copied from Audubon, for the same reason that I did not mention many other things—the peculiar appearance of the Woodcock and of the Brant, for instance—for want of space, but it is not very likely that the artist of "New England Bird Life"—the party who is responsible for the few illustrations which appear to have been designed especially for this work—will suffer in reputation from having these owls credited to him. One cannot help wondering why Dr. Coues permitted some of the cuts to be put in the book; they are neither valuable for deco-

ration nor for illustration; they are worse than useless, they are misleading.

Dr. Coues appears to take exception to my remark that students will regret that he had not seen the desirability of adopting the Smithsonian system of classification and nomenclature instead of using that framed by himself. Unquestionably any author has the right to adopt whatever nomenclature he may think best, and is "at liberty to take all proper means" to have any system prevail, as Dr. Coues asserts, but the learned Doctor must not forget that those who purchase books and who read them, have also the right to regret when an author pursues any course which increases the difficulty of studying a subject, or which, in their opinion, conflicts with its best interest. And those who are interested in the study of ornithology feel themselves at liberty to "take all proper means" to prevent the confusion which will inevitably arise should these two systems come into equally general use.

That the readers of the *Chronicle* who may not have examined those works shall have an intelligent idea of the causes which lead to this confusion, I will quote a few examples of their differences, selected from the latest editions.

In the first group, the *Turdidae*, Mr. Ridgway opens the Smithsonian "Catalogue" with the Wood Thrush, and places the Robin as tenth, while Dr. Coues' "Check List" places the Robin first and the Wood Thrush sixth, and so on, no one species having an equal position in both classifications.

In nomenclature the differences are al-

most as great, though a few species have the same name in both. In this very same group, at the opening of the books, Mr. Ridgway gives *Merula migratoria* as the scientific name of the Robin, while Dr. Coues gives *Turdus migratorius*.

The Gray-cheeked Thrush is called by Mr. Ridgway *Hylocichla aliciae*, and Dr. Coues calls it *Turdus ustulatus aliciae*. Both Doctor Coues and Mr. Ridgway have given the Hermit a trinomial appellation; but while the former calls it *Turdus unalascae nanus* it has received from the latter author *Hylocichla unalascae pallasi*. Turn to the middle of the book and we will find that Dr. Coues gives the Barn Owl the specific name of *Pratincola* and Mr. Ridgway, *Americanus*. Mr. Ridgway mentions three sub-species or varieties of the Great-horned Owl, for which he adopts the names of *subarcticus*, *arcticus saturatus*, while Dr. Coues gives but two and calls these *arcticus* and *pacificus*—and so on through the entire work.

The "Long-tailed Jæger" of Coues' list is named *buffoni* and in the Smithsonian list it is *parasiticus*,—the same English name being given to the two species; and the very last species mentioned in the Smithsonian list is not given by Dr. Coues.

Such being fair examples of these rival systems, it does not require a brilliant imagination to foresee that their use will produce confusion. I have neither the knowledge nor the inclination to discuss their relative merits or demerits. I am looking at the entire question from the standpoint of a student who finds the difficulties of study increased by the two being used. Do I stand alone in this position? Are not the mass of those who read such books as "New England Bird Life" ornithologists only in a very amateurish way? And even of the more advanced students are there not but very few who bother to hunt up the authorities for the different names or who care a fig which is adopted? To the greater number it is of

little consequence what name a bird is known by, but a very important matter that the nomenclature shall not be so confusing that there is an added difficulty in the way of determining to which species a name refers.

Dr. Coues does not deny that the use of these two systems will lead to confusion, indeed in his letter he is frank enough to admit that "it is to be *regretted* that there are two claimants for public favor"; and in an article published in the January number of the Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club he goes further and implies that he considers it an imperative necessity that there should be but *one* system in use and suggests the assembling of "a congress of American ornithologists to discuss, vote upon, and decide each case in which the Doctors disagreed the congressmen to bind themselves to abide by the decision of the majority." By the way this does not quite harmonize with what the learned Doctor has asserted in his letter, *i. e.*, "It is evident that in matters of science there can be no 'authority' or 'officiality' especially of that impersonal kind which could be attributed to any institution." Would not this congress which he proposes be an institution whose authority all its members—all American ornithologists—would be bound to follow? And did not Dr. Coues, when he wrote the above, lose sight of the "authority" exercised by the British Association? If he replied to this question he might possibly tell your readers that the "American School," as they call themselves, did not recognize this authority, and in proof of it might state that while the British Association uses only a binominal nomenclature, the "American School" have adopted trinomialism. He might forget to add, however, that European naturalists have condemned the Americans for so doing.

No one who has read much of Dr. Coues' writings can question his superior qualification to prepare a system for classifying

and naming our birds. His extensive knowledge of the subject, the thoroughness and skill which he displays in the execution of what he undertakes, all mark him as pre-eminently fitted for such a work, and if this was a case of Ridgway versus Cones, students would as soon accept the system of the one as of the other. But it is a question of choosing between an established order of affairs and one which seeks to disturb it. The system adopted by the Smithsonian Institution has been used almost exclusively by American students since 1859, at least, and they consider they may safely continue to use what is thought sufficiently correct for the use of that institution.

They felt it a hard enough strain upon their patience to be forced to learn the new names and new arrangements when the "new nomenclature" was issued. It was no slight inconvenience to drop such familiar names as the *steina nigra* of Audubon for the awkward and repulsive trinomial *Hydrochelidon lariformis surinamensis* imposed upon an inoffensive bird by Mr. Ridgway. The new mode was, however, accepted without much murmuring, if without much enthusiasm; but this additional jumbling up of names, this further splitting of already much split hairs was too much for the human nature which is attached to the average student and the nomenclature of the "Check List" has not been used as much as its author desires.

No doubt Dr. Cones feels uncomfortable about the matter; but while no one will question his right to prepare as many systems as he may find amusement in, he must remember that the same unwritten law which grants him this right, gives to others the permission to make use of these systems, or not, just as they may elect.—*Montague Chamberlain.*

We shall be compelled to postpone for one month our articles on Mississippi Valley migration. We have valuable matter in hand for next number.

In 1878 we became an ornithologist. In that year we saw the necessity at once of a check list by ornithologists for ornithologists, and not by one man. We have advocated this always. When we began to read ornithology we were fearfully annoyed with the ugly Latin phrases used by vain and egotistical writers. We came to the conclusion that thoughtful writers would give the Latin name of each bird once and be content with plain English afterwards. When Greek meets Greek it is well to speak Greek; but there is no sense in using a language in a beautiful science that not one per cent of the readers understand. We have boldly advocated reform in this alone for years. Now Mr. Chamberlain has manfully come to the front and is doing good work. A short time ago Benjamin F. Butler, who is without question the smartest man on this continent to-day, in his Exeter speech and also at Harvard, took precisely the same ground that we have advocated for years in favor of a practical education; but right on top of this Charles Francis Adams, Jr., in his *Phi Beta Kappa* oration gave some telling blows in favor of better English and less Greek and Latin, and almost the entire press of North America have sustained his views. We could give a volume of extracts endorsing Mr. Adams, but we have not the room for them, or even enough plain English, let alone Greek and Latin.

A man by the name of Clemens who publishes a small paper in Cleveland, Ohio, took four of our articles in one number and gave no credit. A man with those principles would not hesitate to rob a hen roost.

Honesty is gettin' scarcer ebery year 'case dar is more people ter pervide. De more we multiplies, de furdre from natur' we is, an' de furdre we gits from natur', de less honesty we'se got.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Plain English has been heartily endorsed, only one dissenting and they supposed that the entire abolition of Latin was advocated.

Short-eared Owl.

It is surprising that at this late day we should know so little of this owl as we do. We have examined the works of the older authorities and find but little information, Audubon throwing the most light on the subject. Everywhere we find indefinite quotations from unsatisfactory sources, and much too often the expressions of "said to be," "supposed to be" and "thought to be," which is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory.

Richardson, in *Fauna Boreali Americana*, (1831), states:

"We observed it as far north as latitude sixty-seven degrees; and a female, killed at Fort Franklin, on the 20th of May, contained several pretty large eggs nearly ready for exclusion. . . . "according to Mr. Hutchins it lays ten or twelve white eggs."

Wilson knew nothing of the breeding habits of this bird, believing it to be simply a winter visitant to the United States, and breeding in the far north. He says:

"In the United States it is also a bird of passage, coming to us from the north in November, and departing in April." "The bird represented in the plate was shot in New Jersey, a few miles below Philadelphia, in a thicket of pines." "It flies frequently by day, and particularly in dark, cloudy weather; takes short flights, and, when sitting and looking sharply around, erects the two slight feathers that constitute its horns, which are at such times very noticeable; but, otherwise not perceivable. No person on slightly examining this bird after being shot, would suspect it to be furnished with horns; nor are they discovered but by careful search, or previous observation, on the living bird."

Nuttall in his last edition simply gives a rehash of Wilson, Richardson and Bewick and says:

"We have observed it at Atovi, one of the Sandwich Islands in the Pacific, as well as in the Territory of Oregon."

This edition was published after Nuttall's journey across the continent to the Columbia river and return home *via* Sandwich Islands and Cape Horn back to Boston, and yet Townsend, who was Nuttall's companion, shot specimens on the Columbia river and afterwards gave them to Audubon. From the correspondence and material in our possession referring to this expedition we are inclined to the belief that Townsend did not allow Nuttall to know the extent of the ornithological

knowledge gained by him on this trip, or the number of birds shot, as he fully intended to publish a work on North American Birds, and did get out one number in 1839, but surrendered to Audubon when he commenced his seven vol. octavo edition.

Audubon besides quoting previous authors, gives us considerable original information from his own observations. He also gives an excellent portrait of the bird. We quote from him. Vol. I, page 141:

"The only nest of this bird that I have found was placed on one of the high mountain ridges of the great pine forest. [Pa.] It contained four eggs, nearly ready to be hatched. They were of a dull bluish white, covered with excrement, of a somewhat elongated or elliptical form, measuring an inch and a half in length, and an inch and an eighth in breadth. The nest which I met with on the 17th of June, was placed under a low bush and covered over by tall grass, through which a path had been made by the bird. It was formed of dry grass, raked together in a slovenly manner, and quite flat, but covering a large space, on one side of which was found many pellets, and two field mice, which must have been brought there in course of the preceding night, as they were quite fresh. I should never have discovered the nest had not the sitting bird made a noise by clicking its bill as I was passing close by. The poor thing was so intent on her task that I almost put my hand on her before she moved; and then, instead of flying off, she hopped with great leaps until about ten rods from me, keeping up a constant clinking of her mandibles. Having satisfied myself as to the species, made an outline of two of the eggs, and measured them, I proceeded slowly to a short distance and watched her movements. Having remained silent and still for about ten minutes, I saw her hop toward the nest, and soon felt assured that she had resumed her task. It was my intention to revisit the spot and take note of the growth of the young, but letters which came to me from Philadelphia a few days after, induced me to return thither; and since then I have had no opportunity of examining either the eggs or the young of the Short-eared Owl."

Dr. Coues adds but little that is new to the above. He says:

"I procured one specimen at Fort Randall in the winter of 1872-73"

He further says:

"It is decidedly the commonest owl about Washington, D. C., especially in Winter." "On one occasion I observed a gathering of twenty or thirty individuals on the Colorado river, below Fort Mojave;" "The birds were sitting quite closely together in the rank herbage bordering the river; some flopped hurriedly off as the steamboat came abreast of them, while others stood to their perches as we passed."

In the Bull. of the Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. IV, page 223, W. E. D. Scott, writing from Long Beach, N. J., says:

"Rather common; resident; breeds. Took a nest and seven partly incubated eggs, June 28, 1878.

The following, which is decidedly the most interesting information so far placed on record, was furnished by Mr. H. A. Kline at our request, after purchasing from him a set of eight eggs. Mr. Kline makes no vague statements, but gives us interesting facts as he observed them, and in a straightforward manner:

"My first acquaintance with this bird was in the Spring of 1880, while on a ducking expedition in the Winnebago swamps of Illinois. As I was tramping through the dry grass along the edge of a marsh, and on the look-out for more edible game, a pair of these birds was flushed from the tall grass, I succeeded in winging one with the right barrel, and after sending $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of No. 5 shot after the other in vain, I proceeded to examine my prize, which proved to be a male in fine plumage. I afterward learned of several being killed in the same locality. I found these birds very common in Johnson and Gage counties, Nebraska. On one occasion while out shooting prairie chickens in the winter of '81-82 I noticed one of these birds rise from the grass about fifty yards in front of me. A load of shot soon brought it to the ground, when at the report of the gun four others raised from the grass, all of which were within fifty yards of me, but they were all very shy and kept well out of range. They seemed very loth to leave the place, as I found them in the same locality every day for a fortnight. They were very wild, but I succeeded in taking two more good specimens. The site where these birds were killed was along an old ravine, which was covered with a heavy growth of prairie grass. I could notice no variation in the markings of any of these birds. I did not disturb the birds at that place after securing the three, as I thought they would breed there, and I often noticed four or five of them flying about after sundown in search of mice, etc. They appeared to be common anywhere on the prairies, although I always met with best success along the ravines. On the 17th of May I took my dog (a pointer) and went to the same place where I got my specimens, to look for their nest, which I found without much trouble. The dog was ranging a short distance in front of me when he was suddenly attacked by one of the Owls. It was soon joined by the other (the male) and together they succeeded in driving him from the field. They would swoop from the right and left and strike him on the back with their wings. Not being used to such treatment by any members of the feathered tribe he beat a hasty retreat, followed by both birds. After chasing him some distance they returned to me and manifested great displeasure by swooping very close to me and snapping their bills as many Owls do when angry. I soon came upon the nest, which was placed upon the ground, and contained eight white eggs. They were of an oblong oval shape, and the shell closely resembled that of the Long-eared Owl. Though the eggs are not near as round as the Long-eared Owl's, being much less through the lesser axis. The nest consisted of a mass of dry prairie grass placed on the ground, and was hollowed out two inches deep. The interior was lined with fine grass, and the whole displayed a good bit of skill in nest making for an owl. The eggs of this nest are now in the possession of Jos. M. Wade, Boston, Mass. The same week I found two more nests, both of which were destroyed by fire before the set of eggs was completed. One of these nests was on a high knoll, and the other in a ravine. A gentleman who had been watching these birds for several years told me he found a nest in 1880 which contained six young birds and

one egg. The young varied much in size and must have been hatched at different times. The eggs of the first set I found showed the same variation in the size of the embryos. I don't think these birds ever prey upon anything but small animals, and I have never found them in the vicinity of timber. I have tried trapping them by placing a steel trap on the top of a pole, but never succeeded in catching a bird."

The following received from G. A. McCallum, Dunville, Ont., is also a valuable addition to the life history of this bird:

A flock of Short-eared owls, that is if six may be called a flock, have taken up their residence in the outskirts of our town this winter (1882-3), and as many as four have been seen together flitting about the fields as if in play, dipping down to the ground, then soaring up again, chasing one another, etc. Is this conduct not odd? I have secured two of them, and hope to bag the rest, although they are very wary. A friend of mine while shooting in the marsh last fall had just shot a snipe when one of this genus darted at the falling bird and had secured it, when the other barrel dropped him and he now sits in my collection."

Long-eared Owl.

On the 12th of April, 1880, I flushed out of a cedar tree, in the middle of chestnut woods, a pair of Long-eared Owls, these being the first I had ever seen in this section. I commenced a most vigorous search for the nest, but failed to find it; the Owls in the meantime manifested their disapproval of intruders by giving vent to their low, plaintive wails, varied by an occasional grating sound, and sometimes biting at the limb on which they would alight, which induced me to believe they contemplated building near by. I returned on April 18th and started the female from an old Crow's nest which a pair of Squirrels had piled with fine grass and leaves, and which contained four eggs in the most comfortable nest I ever saw. They had burrowed down to the hollow and left simply a space large enough for their heads to stick up through to the outer world. The average of the eggs in measurement was 1.35×1.22 . The next season (1881) I could find no nest in that wood, but on the other side of an immense meadow, about a mile distant, I found a nest April 21st in an old Cooper's Hawk nest. On climbing I found three eggs, which were left to be hatched, for I wished to find the time occupied in incubation.

On visiting the nest May 17th, twenty-six days later, I found three little Owls just hatched. I went again June 2d and took one young, which I have in confinement to this time. It is extremely interesting to watch its movements, which are more difficult on account of its being more affected by light than my others, (I have Screech and Barred in confinement,) but his confidence and familiarity won my affections at once. He will eat any kind of meat, but give him a nest of mice and he is in the third heaven of delight. No sooner does he see the basket of chaff, which he knows contains his favorite dish, than he goes through a very strange habit, namely, that of running each of his claws through his bill, (ostensibly for the purpose of keeping them sharp, I suppose.) On depositing the heap in the corner of his room, which is quite dark, he flies to it and begins his search, scratching after the manner of hens. While doing this he keeps a contented, preening noise, but the instant a mouse is found it changes to a quick, sharp, expressive note, and, grasping it so tightly one may hear its bones crack, he flies to his perch, stretches himself to his full height, erects his ears, gives two or three notes of triumph, all the while looking me in the face; then carries the mouse to his box and returns for more. Such are a few of his habits, and, although foolish and sentimental the stern scientist and collector may deem me, yet I say never shall I be guilty of taking another set of *Asio Americanus* eggs to enrich my cabinet, for if they develop into such beings as my little friend, it is better to let them remain to fulfil their proper sphere; for, Mr. Editor, it is a ponderous question, How may we best study life?—*F. H. C., Rehoboth.*

We have heard that measures would soon be taken by the ornithologists in convention to make a check list. In such movement the Smithsonian should be represented, otherwise such a check list would not gain a foothold.

CANADA JAY.—On a visit to a logging camp in northwestern Maine in the Winter and Spring of '80-'81, I found a nest of the Canada Jay, March 16th, with four nearly fresh eggs. The nest was in an evergreen, ten feet from the ground, and composed of moss and twigs on the outside; inside, like the Blue Jay's, of fine roots. Found another March 20th, with four eggs; took one and found it fresh; the remaining three hatched in fifteen days. They are a noisy bird at certain times, rather odd in actions; color of eggs, grey, marked with different shades of brown.—*F. H. C., Rehoboth, Mass.*

Notes from Pittsfield, Mass.

I set out to find the nest of that Rose-breasted Grosbeak which I mentioned in a former letter, and finally succeeded, when it contained two young. The nest was built upon a stunted pine, and was about six feet from the ground, in a young thick wood lot. I was going to try and select a male from the nest, and obtain such a pet as you have in Jack, but I left them too long. After visiting them several times I found both young with the parent birds among the branches hopping from limb to limb, far out of my reach, so I said sour grapes and turned from the spot in a new direction I had not explored. I had not proceeded far when I saw a small bird fly from a small stump directly in my path. I hastened forward and found a nest new to me containing three small blue eggs, about the size of the common Bluebird, excepting the color was a deep blue green. I knew I had a prize, and sat down to watch for the Thrush to return—for such it was—to observe her, but she did not appear. I took the nest and eggs and found the latter very much incubated, and had to use my large drill to blow them, and then with much difficulty, making a larger hole than I wished. The nest was sunk into the

hollow stump more than the sketch shows.

After that I found a Wilson Thrush with three eggs upon the ground beneath the shadow of a blackberry bush—such a nest and bird as I found at Rockville, Ct. These were also badly gone and I could not blow them. Both nests are in my possession. A set of four Red-eyed Vireos was my next, and a set of five Catbird's came after, the last one of which I blew the end out in cleaning.

I have seen only one Baltimore Oriole here, and that was on May 12th. He stayed for a few days and then disappeared. Not a Blue Jay, Chewink, Indigo Finch have I seen, and I don't believe they visit this locality. Bobolinks are here in great numbers and make the meadows ring with their melody. Thrushes, too, are plenty here and in variety.—*T. J. Rigney.*

Woodcock and Turtle.

While on a collecting trip at Gardner's Lake, New London County, Conn., last Spring, we made some enquiries of an old gentleman about Birds of Prey, Ducks, etc., about the lake. After giving us the desired information the old gentleman stated that he was a few years ago driving slowly down the road when he heard something "flopping" its wings over the wall. Thinking it might be a wounded bird he got over the wall and found a Woodcock struggling in the mud, flapping its wings laboriously. Taking it for granted the bird was wounded, he seized it and in pulling it out found that its foot was fast, and he only secured it by leaving its foot behind. This state of things surprised the old man not a little, and while he stood there he noticed the mud moving where he had drawn the bird out. He secured a hoe which was in his wagon and began to dig in the mud; finding there was something alive there, he worked until he brought to *terra firma* a good sized Snapping Turtle. It would appear that the Woodcock in search of food had walked

over the soft mud, and the turtle, also in search of a dinner, had seized the Woodcock by the foot, and would have taken it under only the hole was not deep enough for the mud turtle to get the bird below the surface; hence the struggle for life.

THE BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK, (*Zamelodia melanocephala*), is a well known bird and one whose biography has been pretty well written up, but the following fact—one which does not appear to have got into print—may prove interesting to the readers of the O. and O. On June 1st I surprised a male in the rather unmasculine act of incubating. The nest was in the crotch of a cottonwood sapling, in a grove near the Arkansas river, and about seven feet from the ground. I first saw it at a distance of forty or fifty feet, and was thus enabled, by a careful approach, to identify the bird on the nest, but to make "assurance doubly sure," I shot the bird and examined its generative organs. The female was not seen at all, although the cries of the male attracted quite a lot of sympathetic flycatchers, wrens, orioles, etc. Whether this assumption of household cares is a customary habit of the bird, or merely an individual instance of petticoat subjection, I leave to some more experienced guesser. The nest contained four fresh eggs and was composed outwardly of dead weed stalks loosely stuck together, and inwardly of dry rootlets compactly woven to form the cup. Although a great many males have been seen here this Spring, I have not seen a single female.—*C. W. Beckham, South Pueblo, Colorado.*

"OUR HOLIDAY BIRD." In your February number "J. M. W." notes the Bluebird as like the poor—always with us. It might further be said that it always bears the National colors, Red, White and Blue. It is also one of the most strikingly peculiar of American singing birds, and in its habits a model of civilized bird life.—*J. G. Cooper, M. D., Haywards, Cal.*

LEAST BITTERN.—One of my collectors, while visiting a Least Bittern's nest, saw the bird close by in the rushes, in that peculiar position they adopt when trying to conceal themselves, viz.: clinging to the reeds in a perpendicular position with head and bill pointing up in the air, and neck stretched to its fullest extent. My friend approached her quietly and reached out his hand toward her with the intention of catching her, if possible; but as she showed no signs of fear he first touched her and then stroked her on the breast and back. Another collector, who was with him, then did the same thing, coming up to the bird in another direction, she merely moving her head slightly to look at him, and resuming her former position again. My friends left her still clinging to the rushes where they first found her. The birds are often seen here in similar situations, but I have never heard of one acting in this manner before. The bird did not seem injured in any way, and only moved her eyes when first touched. At a little distance they look like a stick or some dead rushes, when in the position described.—*Snowdon Howland, Newport, R. I.*

CALIFORNIA LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN.—June 18, 1882, a friend and myself started for Soap Lake, San Felipe, with the intention of getting a few sets of eggs of this bird. Arriving there we pulled on our long boots and plunged into the tules in different directions. After an hour's hard work we returned and reported—one set of three badly incubated eggs. My friend's experience was about the same as mine. I had found and examined some twenty-five nests, and of that number only three had been lined and used. Two had been deserted, the third had the above mentioned set. The other nests were of the same appearance outwardly—being woven of coarse bark of tules—but without the soft, woolly lining of fine shreds of rotten tule and ducks' feathers. Some looked new, others

old, and were situated, mostly, just out of reach in the taller clumps of tules. I saw but few birds, and these were fearless, approaching within two feet and looking me in the eye. Now, what can be the object of all these extra nests? Do the other birds build them for a shelter, and, in case they are disturbed, can immediately occupy another nest? or, like children, who build mud houses for amusement, and because they have nothing else to do? I hope to make another trip to the place when I have more time, and to be in better season.—*A. D. Butterfield, San Jose, Cal.*

Brief Newsy Notes.

LARGE SET. R. M. Mitchell, Sandford, Florida, reports finding a set of seven Mockingbird's eggs April 30.

YELLOW-BREADED CHAT. W. H. Wright took a male Yellow-breasted Chat at Framingham, Mass, May 18, 1883.

GOLDEN EAGLE. W. O. Emerson, Haywards, California, received a fine specimen for mounting Jan. 26, which was shot at Livermore with quail shot.

FISH HAWK SHOT. For several years a pair of Fish Hawks have visited East Rochester, N. H., on the Cochecho river. Sportsmen have tried each year in vain to secure them, until April 18 of this year, when Thomas Gotts secured one of them with a shot from a small rifle. It measured five feet six inches in extent.—*E. M. Sinclair, East Rochester, N. H.*

HUMANITY. A friend writes saying that dumb animals were made for the comfort of man, etc. We admit this—that is where extreme civilization obtains—dumb animals are made to minister to the wants and comfort of man, but in extremely wild countries, the jungles of India for instance, man is made to administer to the wants and comfort of dumb animals—that is, when they can catch him, and in their home they make out about as well as civilized man with his deadly weapons.

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BOSTON, SEPTEMBER, 1883.

No. 9.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NOTE.—The stations and observers, to which the numbers refer, are given in the O. and O. for April.

Of all our birds few are better known than the Purple Martin (*P. subis*), few are more regular in their northward migrations, and yet where most of them winter is still an open question. They certainly leave the United States entirely at the approach of cold weather; but beyond our southern border are several resident species so nearly like our Martins that observers have not yet certainly distinguished them, and whether our birds mingle with them during the winter around the West Indies, or pass on to the northern part of South America, remains to be decided. Wherever they winter their stay is short, and February sees them again among us. I have no record just when the first ones entered the United States this spring, but by 3-4 they were building at (6), and the first ones reached (13) 3-3. About 3-20 they reached southern Mo. (26) reports them on 3-20, (16) 3.22, and (30) on 3-18 saw four scouts. But cold weather drove them back again immediately, and they did not appear at any new stations for the next ten days, when a second onward movement brought them to (33) 4-1, (32) 4.2, (21) 4-3. They returned to (30) 4-3. (38) saw them 4-3, (41) 4-3. During the night of 4-2 to 4-3 some of these Martins must have travelled 200 to 300 miles—a long journey for us, but to them only a matter of three or four hours' work. Again there is a pause of a few days and then the 8th and 9th of April finds them at (43), (47), (52), (57) and (60). Thus

they were only twenty days in making the trip which took the Robin six weeks.

These birds were the advance guard, but the bulk did not remain far behind, and in general from twelve to fourteen days after the first is seen they are in full numbers. No. (16) found them 4-1 too numerous to count. At (21), (30) and (52) they steadily increased, and about 4-27 were in full numbers; also at the same time the birds of last year began to arrive. Besides the dates already given I have several others which show either a less favorable locality for this species, or else less favorable opportunities of observation. The records are (14) 4-10, (37) a dozen arrived during the week from 4-9 to 4-16. (40) first seen 4-11, and no more until 4-19; (44) 4-18 and (45) 4-10.

As the organization of the Martin is quite delicate, their early migration exposes them to great hardships, and many perish annually—victims of misplaced confidence in the weather. No. 45 tells us “from noon of 4-13 to night of 4.14 a steady cold northeast rain fell, and some of the more tender birds suffered severely. I saw numbers of Martins too benumbed to fly, and found one dead next morning. They had no shelter but a ledge on galvanized iron cornice of a brick building.”

The next bird we take up is the Brown Thrush, (*I. rufus*). The winter home of these birds is the Southern States, but sometimes a few remain as far north as southern Illinois. No. (35) says they are partially resident in the heavy underbrush, but very uncertain, and never numerous during cold weather. From this winter

abode they seem to have spread with remarkable rapidity. Certainly not more than a week or ten days was spent in passing from southern Missouri to central Minnesota. The notes seem to show that migration was very irregular, although probably the following note by (42) on their habits will explain some of the apparent irregularity:

"They appeared 4-11 and were in song, but very shy. At first they uttered only a few notes, and kept entirely out of sight, but 4-14 they became more bold and were seen singing in the tops of the trees."

This habit of keeping secluded is quite common among the first arrivals of nearly all species, and it takes sharp eyes to find them. The record is (21) 4-14, (30) 4-5, (32) 4-9, (37) 4-10, (38) 4-5, (40) 4-14, (41) 4-15, (44) 4-14, (57) 4-14. As what might be called a preparatory move (16) saw two pairs 3-19. The birds reached (60) 4-27. More irregular movements are recorded at (45) 4-23, (47) 5-1, (51) 4-28, and (52) 4-25. For some unknown reason the region around me here is apparently disliked and shunned by the Brown Thrush. After the first one seen, 4-25 and again 4-26, no more were seen until 5-3 and 5-4, one each day, and on 5-6 five were seen. This last date might be called height of the season for this place, as at no other time have I seen more than three a day, and two-thirds of the time I have seen none, though in the woods hours at a time. At (21) the height of the season was 4-27, while (30) reports 4-9 as the arrival of the bulk of the species, and from that date to 4-15, or even later, as height of season.

Although in the Mississippi Valley this species usually nests on trees or bushes, three nests have been reported this spring as found on the ground. No. (43) found one 5-17 on the ground in a little ravine. There had been a rain the night before, and the water had soaked the nest so thoroughly that the birds left it. No. (60) found his first nest 5-21, and his second 5-28, each with four eggs and each on the ground.

Turning now to an entirely different class of birds, let us study the movements of our common Black Snowbird, (*J. hyemalis*.) Unlike all the birds so far considered, he is inseparably connected in our minds not with spring, but with the winter's cold. As he moves south in the fall and early winter, the first ones begin to drop behind in southern Minnesota and northern Wisconsin, but comparatively few are found until we reach Iowa and northern Illinois. From there to Arkansas they are the most numerous winter visitants; then their numbers decrease as we get into the Southern States, although they penetrate even to Florida. In northern United States I have known a single one to remain and brave the forty degrees below zero at White Earth, Minn.

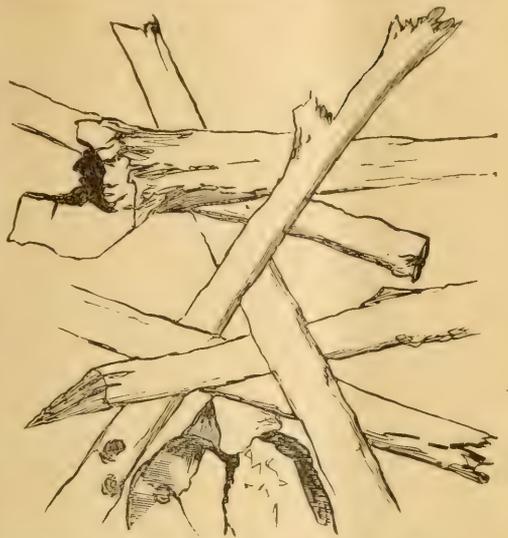
Probably as good a place as any to begin our study will be in central and southern Illinois, where vast numbers of them find a congenial winter home. No. (30) met them everywhere; and during December found five hundred during his week's walks. In Jan. and Feb. they somewhat increased, but 2-24 he says:

"During the week they have diminished, probably by the withdrawal of the late re-inforcements which came in the first part of the month. In sunny places they begin to be musical. 3-11 they are decidedly less numerous, and what is more important, they are much less conspicuous than during the last month. They keep silent on the ground, even during the warm hours, and by disturbing them I was surprised by the large proportion of light colored individuals among them. Judging from this and from their different behavior, I think that many of the old birds, which were in very fine plumage in Feb. have left; and those which remain behind are the young birds. 3-14 seen in several places, but not numerous. 3-16 great arrivals from the south, as numerous as ever, and many old birds among them. 3-30 they were found collected in large flocks, and very much excited, in spite of a cool rain. In a place where twenty wintered I found an army of two hundred singing, chasing, etc. The bulk of these departed for the north 4-4 and 4-12 the last left us."

What Mr. Widmann says of them would apply equally well to all of the central belt of the United States. No. (21) found them about twice as numerous at his station, but they left about the same time. At (32) they were still in large numbers 3-24. At (37) the bulk left 4-9; on 4-16 only 3 or 4 seen, and the last left about

4-20. At (42) they were still very plentiful on 3-29 and after, gradually growing fewer. The last left 4-16. At (43) they were still present as usual 4-5, but left soon after, and 4-18 was the last. When we reach (45) we are beyond their normal winter home for last winter. On 2-11 he saw forty, the first seen since fall. The height of the season was about over 4-8. No. (47) sends a single note that on 3-17 they were passing north by the thousand, some flocks all singing. Still farther beyond their winter home (51) saw none until 4-2, but probably a few stayed in that part of the State as (52) found them an occasional visitor all winter. The full record at (52) is as follows: First single ones came from north Oct. 17; first flock of over one hundred Oct. 20; by Nov. 8 they had scattered into small parties of five to eight, and these nearly all left in Dec. Parties of three to seven were seen Jan. 3d, 8th, 31st, and then only one bird until 3-23, when one flock of eighteen to twenty appeared. Small flocks were seen until 4-2, when they suddenly increased, and the bulk came 4-4. I then saw about one hundred and fifty in a few acres. The same day was also the height of the season, as large numbers, and perhaps the bulk, left that night. On 4-12 only three were seen, and I thought each day would be the last, but a few stayed, though keeping still, and looking very disconsolate, until 4-28, when the last straggler departed. No. (55) saw the first one about 4-4, the bulk left 4-20, and only a few scattered ones remained 4-29. No. (60) is very near the southern limit of the breeding of this species. He saw his first one 4-5, and the last 5-12; yet it is very probable that in the dense tamarac swamps a few miles north of him some remain to nest.

FISH HAWK'S EGGS. Large set. Chas. C. Richards, Norwich, Conn., took a set of four Fish Hawk's eggs from one of the rocks on the west side of Plum Island. May 20, 1883.



PECULIAR NESTING PLACE. On May 21, 1880, Paul Hoffman, of Rockville, Conn., while out collecting noticed a Purple Martin enter the end of a hollow rail in a Virginia fence. On examining the cavity he found the nest of the Purple Martin about eighteen-inches in the cavity. It was composed of dried grass and contained four eggs. The opening to the nest was about four feet four inches from the ground. Our illustration is a correct representation sketched on the spot.

GREAT YELLOW-LEGS. On June 9, 1883, I found a nest of *Totanus melanoleucus* in a bog quite near a brook. The nest was composed of bog grass and a very few feathers for lining. It was concealed by tall grass so that one might have walked over it often and not have seen it. The nest contained two eggs, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length by $\frac{7}{8}$. The ground color was dull olive, with dark amber blotches, which were largest at the larger end. I had one egg taken away at a time, taking two and leaving two in the nest to hatch. I have seen the bird a number of times at the brook before and since finding the nest. Can any of your readers inform me whether this is a rare find or not in this section.—Thos. Morgan, Somerville, N. J.

Great-horned Owls.

Noticing "Coe's Strain" of Great-horned Owls leads me to speak of another strain. Your readers in Eastern Mass., will remember in the Fall of the year 1869 we had a "September gale" which prostrated many forest trees. Early in the spring following my father in looking over a piece of heavy wood which had suffered considerably, noticed in an immense chestnut tree which had fallen against another about two-thirds to the ground, a Great-horned Owl. He started for it, when it flew. Turning about to leave he glanced up, when he noticed peering at him from a heap of leaves thrown together with a few twigs in the crotch of the tree an immense head illuminated by a pair of great staring eyes. On coming home he told his discovery. I did not lose much time in going to the tree. Climbing was easy and in a few moment's time I had the set of two white and fresh eggs safely stowed away in my collection box. Those only who have made like finds can imagine my feelings of exultation. I would not have exchanged my seat on that old mossy tree by that Owl's nest, for any King's throne. Such was my first Great-horned Owl's nest, March 3, 1870. For eleven years I annually visited that nest, and never once did they disappoint me. My earliest set was Feb. 27; my latest for first set March 8. In the spring of 1875 I did not take the usual set. I was determined to settle the guess work theory of their incubation. I found it as follows, March 3, fresh; March 16, all right; March 25, do.; March 29, two little Buteos a day old. A second set was always laid each year when I took the first. On March 2, 1882, I started for the well known nest, but alas! for vain expectations. On reaching the summit of the hill which overlooked the woods, I found that the woodman's axe had laid prostrate the forest home of my Owls and only for a pair of high circling Buteos lamenting

the destruction of their retreat, all was still. As I turned away with my now empty box I felt as though one of the joys that make this life of ours worth living was lost, and often as I look on those ten sets of white beauties it carries me back to those crisp winter walks when the collecting season was opened by taking my set of Great-horned Owl's eggs.—*F. H. C., Rehoboth, Mass.*

Red Crossbills.

During the past spring, (1883,) several flocks of Crossbills were frequently observed among the yellow pines which are common on the "^{high} Scotch Plains," about two miles south of this place. On the 17th of March I secured seven specimens—five males and two females. The ovaries of the females showed no signs that the breeding season was near at hand.

April 10th I was attracted to the edge of a small clearing by the song of a Red Crossbill on the top of a tall pine. As I approached, he with two or three others which I had not before seen, flew away. Thinking that some of them might have a nest near by I began searching, and soon found one on a horizontal branch of a pine, about thirty feet ^{higher} from the ground, which looked like that of a squirrel; but on climbing the tree I was much gratified to find that it was the nest of a Red Crossbill, (*Loxia curvirostra Americana*), on which the female was sitting. She did not leave the nest until I was within two or three feet of it, when she flew off and disclosed three eggs which were far advanced in incubation. While I was securing the nest she continued hopping about among the branches, often coming within two or three feet of my hand, uttering now and then a single "chip." The nest consists of a slight frame work of small twigs in which, or rather on which, is built the nest proper. It is composed of fine shreds of Chestnut bark and moss; and contains a few pieces of "caterpillar's silk" and is lined with

moss, (*Usnea*), two or three Great-horned Owl's feathers and several of her own. The nest measures $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth by 5 inches in depth; the cavity $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth. The eggs have a dull white ground with a faint tinge of blue, marked with small spots and lines of brown and black, which tend to form a circle around the larger end. There are also numerous shell markings of a dull lilac color. The eggs measure as follows: $.81 \times .56$, $.82 \times .56$, $.81 \times .55$. I searched carefully for other nests, but was unable to find any, although I saw several of the birds. About half a mile from this spot I saw five or six White-winged Crossbills, (*Loxia leucoptera*), all adult males. I secured one of them, and could have shot more as they were very tame, but did not as I thought the females and their nests might not be far away; but careful search failed to reveal either.

During the month of May, Red Crossbills could be seen daily among the pines. A flock of eighteen or twenty came every day to drink out of a stump in which some water had collected; here I set a fine wire snare and caught a male and a female, which I placed in a large breeding cage. In a day or two they became quite gentle, feeding readily upon any kind of seed. During the day they were quite contented but about sunset they would begin to call to each other and try to get out; they would continue to do this until dark. The female would then nestle down into a nest which had been placed in the cage for a canary, and the male would station himself on the edge of the nest and settle down for the night. At daybreak they would begin their calling again, and this would continue for some time.

On the 14th of May I saw a flock of ten or twelve. Most of them appeared to be young birds. All the others I have seen since March have been adults. By the 1st of June they had all disappeared.—*A. H. Helme, Millers Place, L. I.*

Barred Owl.

The Barred Owl is the most common with me with the exception of the Screech Owl. As a winter resident it becomes quite bold and will often approach the house in search of food. This leads me to mention the capture of my confined bird under the following peculiar circumstances: In my museum I have an open coal grate. One morning while building the fire I was surprised by a Barred Owl tumbling down the chimney with considerable fuss and lack of dignity. Recovering himself he perched on a chair as calmly as though in his native wilds. Of course his capture speedily followed and for two years he has remained in confinement, as stoical as an Athens judge. Nothing moves him except the food, which he seizes with avidity, and swallows with equal haste. Although rather ludicrous to watch as he sits wrapped in the consciousness of his own moral dignity, yet he is less interesting to my mind than any of my other feathered friends. This being my opinion I am not quite as lenient with him as with the Long-eared Owl, and woe to the nest which comes in my circuit of collecting.

My first Barred Owl's nest well do I remember. It was the first nest of any Owl's or Hawk's I had ever found, and it being in the beginning of my oological aspirations, the next question to be solved was how to get it, for it was most provokingly placed in an old Fisk Hawk's nest at the top of an old dead tree, smooth for forty feet without a limb. Climbing irons I had never heard of. To "shin" it was out of the question. My only resource was to let them hatch, which I did. Three pair now breed in this vicinity. One nest is in the hollow of an old pine stub fifteen feet or so from the ground. Number two is in a heavy wood, where they have the choice of several old Hawk's nests, seeming not to remain only for one year in the same nest. Number three was placed last year in an old Crow's nest, at the top of a

very tall pine. These Owls have bred in the forementioned places for at least seven or eight years. I have seven sets from pair number one taken annually. My earliest date March 27; latest April 18—at both dates eggs being fresh. Incubation has been noted for one pair twenty-six days from date of finding complete set; the other occupied twenty four days from same time. For the latter nest I would say the eggs might have been sat upon for a day or two previous to my finding the nest. Eggs number three and four to a complete set and measure on an average about 2.00×1.80 .—*F. H. C. Rehoboth,*

Notes from California.

While sitting down beside a little creek sketching, I saw the following birds round about me, some in the willows along the creek, others in the tall redwoods and firs: California Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Lewis' Woodpecker, Gairdner's Woodpecker, Sparrow Hawk, California Jay, California Song Sparrow, California Brown Towee, Steller's Jay, Least Tit, California Chickadee, Western Bluebird, (of the chestnut-backed) which had rather of a funny place for a nest. She had taken up her quarters in an old Cliff Swallow's nest on a rafter, near the centre ridge, in under the roof of the saw mills, right over the logging way, where they go rolling and booming over to the big saws to chew up into lumber. She seemed to take no notice of man. I have sets of five from the California Brown Towhee, California Song Sparrow, Black Pewee, Green-backed Goldfinch, Russet-backed Thrush, Western Chipping Sparrow, also a set of twenty-one California Quail. I got a set of five from the Black-capped Yellow Warbler, last year, and the Western Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Found a nest of the California Brown Towhee in an old coal oil can this season. I found my first W. Meadow Lark nest this season, with six fine eggs as I ever saw; a large set I think.

White-bellied Swallow, (Cliff and Barn varieties,) Swift, Allen's Humming-bird, Western Purple Finch, Blue Grosbeak, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole—Black-capped Yellow Warbler, Russet-backed Thrush, Brewer's and Red and Buff-shouldered Blackbirds along the river. Spurred Towhee, found the Western Robin breeding there, Red-shafted Flicker, a few along with other Woodpeckers.—*W. O. Emerson, Hagwards, Cal.*

Flying Squirrels and Their Work.

The collector in the woods of New England will occasionally find a nest of Flying Squirrels where he is expecting a set of Woodpecker's eggs. We once put our hand into a hole expecting to bring out a set of "Wakeups," but, instead, we got a mother and two young Flying Squirrels. At another time we tapped at a fresh Woodpecker's hole about five and one-half feet high, when a Flying Squirrel answered the summons. She sat in the hole a few minutes and then moved to the top of the stump, a foot higher, for a minute or so, when she returned to the hole not in the least annoyed by our presence. At another time we caught a whole brood by striking the saplings or young trees with an axe and having three persons to catch them when they struck the ground. They are very easily tamed and make beautiful pets. There is no doubt but what they destroy eggs when they can get at them. We retired one night leaving a large number of eggs on the desk that we had just cleaned. A female Flying Squirrel opened every one in the night and was asleep in a Vireo's nest in the morning. We supposed these Squirrels always bred in holes in trees or stubs, but A. H. Helme of Miller's Place, N. Y., writes that in his section as a rule they build in hollow trees, but it is very common to find them building their own nests among the branches as the Gray Squirrels do. He has this season found two such nests containing young, and has

often lost sets of eggs by them; and knew of one killing a Chickadee and throwing her out of the nest and taking possession of it. The Gray Squirrel destroys the nests of Golden-winged Woodpeckers, and he has to blame him for destroying a set of Hairy Woodpecker's eggs.

Notes from Greenfield, Mass.

While collecting on the 18th of June I found a nest of *Dendroica blackburniae*, Blackburnian Warbler, which contained three eggs; and to identify them I shot the female. The nest was situated about thirty feet high in a maple tree. It is a very plain structure resembling that of the Purple Finch. The eggs are white with a bluish tint and spotted with reddish-brown and lilac, chiefly about the larger end.

Sitta carolinensis, (White-bellied Nuthatch.) A nest found by me contained four eggs. I took them all and put in a wooden egg and in that way I managed to get twelve eggs. The nest was in a hole two feet from the ground and measured two by two and one-half inches.

I have stuffed about 105 birds and made over eighty skins. Among some of the rare birds I have shot are the White-winged Crossbills, five; Cape May Warbler, one; Blue-headed Vireo, two; Shore Lark, one; Yellow-bellied Woodpecker, one; Pine Finch, one.

Among the rare eggs I have collected are Pine-creeping Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, White-bellied Nuthatch, Blackburnian Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Broad-winged Hawk, Whippoorwill, four Humming Bird's nests, Scarlet Tanager, Red-bellied Nuthatch, &c.—*S. W. Comstock*.

ARRIVALS. Pine Grosbeaks arrived Dec. 10th, and were seen at intervals till March 24th. On several occasions I saw flocks of forty or fifty individuals, but usually from ten to twenty in a flock. Females were much more abundant than males.

Feb. 23d I saw the first Shore Lark that I ever saw in this locality. It was in the

highway, and as I drove along it would fly a few yards in advance of me and alight, then fly again, keeping on in this way for two miles.

April 4 a flock of birds, which from the description given me of them must have been Red Crossbills, were seen at this place. Birds arrive very late this spring as the following dates show:

Robin, March 16; Pine Finch, March 22; Bluebird, Mar. 26; Pileated Woodpecker, Mar. 26; Song Sparrow, April 2; Blue Snowbird, April 3; Phoebe, April 5; Grass Finch, Apr. 5; Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, April 5; Wilson's Thrush, April 14.

Although the Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers are residents, I have seen none of them during the past winter.—*C. O. Tracy, Taftsville, Vt.*

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK. May 24, '83, I found a nest of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak containing one egg. The female flew from the nest as I approached and alighted in a low tree very near me. When I visited the place the following day the male bird was upon the nest. I waited until there were four eggs and then took them, feeling proud enough of my prize. These birds have never been seen in this locality before to my knowledge. They were strangers to me but it didn't take me long to get acquainted with them. Are they common in any portions of Eastern Conn? I have found Cowbird's eggs very common this Summer. Have twice found three of their eggs in nests of the Red-eyed Vireo. Have found several nests of the Golden-crowned Thrush and noticed remarkable variations in the markings of their eggs.—*Chas. Edw. Prior, Jewett City, Conn.*

LATE NESTING.—July 4, found fresh eggs of Marsh Hawk and Mallard Duck. Collecting, notwithstanding unfavorable weather, has been very good—13 sets 565; 14 sets 555; 7 sets 430; 3 sets 442; 5 sets 256.—*G. S. Ayersborg, Vermillion, D. T.*

SWAMP SPARROW. In the O. and O. for Dec. 1, 1882, I recorded a Swamp Sparrow's nest. It was so recorded by mistake, and should be Song Sparrow.—*C. H. Wilder.*

Pigeon Hawk.

Sparrow Hawk.

I spent the Spring of 1882 at Brandywine Springs, New Castle Co., Del., and a great deal of my time was spent in collecting. In one corner of the grounds, about two hundred yards from the house, was an old, deserted building, called the "Old Lodge," and during the months of February and March I had observed a pair of Pigeon Hawks spending a great deal of time in its vicinity. Thinking they must have a nest somewhere near, I made diligent search for it, but my endeavors were fruitless until March 2^d. When I was entering the lodge that morning, I was surprised and perhaps startled by the female Hawk flying out from under the roof of the porch, almost in my face. This gave me a fresh start, and after a short search I found the nest, containing four fresh eggs, in a crevice on the lower part of the porch roof. The nest was placed in the hollow between two beams of the roof; was covered by the roof and had for a foundation a beam running the length of the roof. The interior measured 12×5 inches and was 6 inches high. The entrance measured 12×4 inches. The bottom of the nest was a few small twigs, covered by a layer an inch thick of the inner bark of the swamp maple, and very slightly hollowed. The eggs somewhat resembled those of the Sparrow Hawk, but were one-eighth of an inch longer and one-sixteenth wider, perfectly elliptical, and marked unevenly with five dots of light reddish brown, tending to congregate in spots. One—the freshest—had a large blotch of the same color on one side, covering nearly one-fourth of the whole surface. Further examination showed that they had built there for at least three years before, as that number of similar nests were found in other crevices near the first. It seemed strange that so shy a Hawk should choose such a nesting place, but as the grounds had not been used for at least five years, until the previous Fall, that may account for it; though

the "Old Lodge" stood not more than twenty-five feet from a much traveled road.

The same Spring (1882) I found two Sparrow Hawk's nests about two miles north of the Springs. They were both built in the same tree—a large hollow sycamore—and the two families seemed to live very peacefully. One was in a hole in a branch about fifty feet from the ground and contained three eggs laid on the bare wood, as were all the eggs of this species that I ever found. The second nest was rather curious. When climbing after the first, I noticed a second pair of birds going in and out of a large hole near the root of the tree, and after securing the first set, reversed my climbers and with a good deal of hard labor ascended to the first large branch, about twenty-five feet up, where the female flew out and dropped down past me. I found another set of eggs in the hollow of this branch, about three feet back from the trunk. There were several small knot-holes in the branch near the nest, but none of them would admit anything larger than a Sparrow, so that the Hawks were compelled to ascend inside the tree to reach their nest. How they found and why they chose such a situation I leave for others to conjecture—*Charles D. Gibson, Renovo, Pa.*

ALBINO BLACKBIRD. Theodore Hoffman, Rockville, Conn., May 15, 1883; shot a male Crow Blackbird with a white throat and cheeks with a few white feathers scattered over the body. It was first seen in the Spring.

MONKEY-FACED OWLS. We tender our thanks to Wm. P. Tarrant of Saratoga, N. Y., for a fine card photograph of the above Owls, which we may engrave and have something to say about in a future number.

MOUNTED BIRDS lost in a Cyclone. W. H. H. King of Jacksonville, Ill., lost about 300 mounted birds and some skins. They were in the hands of a taxidermist who with five of his family were killed in the storm.

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BOSTON, OCTOBER, 1883.

No. 10.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NOTE.—The stations and observers, to which the numbers refer, are given in the O. and O. for April.

Our attention will next be occupied with the WARBLERS, a large group of birds, which to most of the observers was new ground and consequently was not very well cultivated. There are in the Mississippi Valley thirty-six different species of Warblers known to be present regularly during the spring migration, and besides these a few others whose occurrence is so irregular that we need not take them into account in our work. Of these thirty-six regular visitors all have been noticed by one or more of the observers, though most stations send but few notes; in fact one must be very familiar with this difficult group or else use a shot-gun or field glass.

The most easily studied is the YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, (*D. coronata*), which, very unlike most of the others, remains quite far north during the winter. No. (35) found them scattered over the bottom lands in large numbers throughout the winter. Their plumage was then much plainer than in the spring. They were usually hunting around the bark of large trees looking for insect's eggs. At (21) they were abundant until the very cold weather in January, when they disappeared. Two flocks were found by (30) on New Year's day and he says, "Most of them did not stay through the winter, but a few did. On 2-19 in an old graveyard that has a fine growth of several kinds of evergreens, I found a flock of fifteen, which had probably spent the winter there.

Their characteristic loud 'cheek' was continually heard in the wood, that was populated by a flock. On Dec. 28, '82 only one bird was found Feb. 22, '83, but their chief attraction, the berries of the poison ivy, which were then in great abundance, were all gone."

The northward movement as warm weather approaches is not very regular. A few scouts reached (30) on 3-22, (51) 4-9; (52) 4-11—only one and that a female!—(57) 4-13 and (60) 4-19. Then nearly three weeks later the main body followed. It reached (30) 4-9 and fresh arrivals irregularly swelled the ranks, until about 4-13 they were most abundant; then they decreased for a few days, but were followed by a second detachment which was very numerous at (35) 4-20, and the next day appeared in full numbers at both (30) and (20)—with the exception of one bird on 2-13. These were the first that had been seen at (21) since the cold drove them away January 5. On 4-25 the bulk appeared at (45), who counted a hundred at one time. The small trees were fairly alive with them, especially the willows along the creeks. The same day a few appeared for the second time at (52). They remained in great numbers at (30) and (21) for about a week from 4-22 to 4-29, and the same night, that of May 1, that the bulk left (30), they arrived at (52), though I am hardly prepared to say that they were the same individuals and hardly think they were. The arrival of the Warblers this spring at (52) was very late. Up to 5-2 Yellow-rumps and Pine-creeping Warblers were the only kinds seen and

only nine individuals in all of them, while at the same date the twenty-third kind arrived at St. Louis. The later movements of the Yellow-rumps were also irregular. A flock of twenty-five was found 5-3, both male and female, and in quite loud song. Next day they were the most numerous of the half dozen kinds present, about 80 per cent being males in full plumage. The next day not one could be found. About eighteen were seen 5-6. On 5-7 the males of last year came and most old males had left. The bulk left 5-12 and the last one followed 5-17, about two weeks after (30) saw his last on 5-5. At (21) they remained a few days later, the last leaving about 5-8. No. (57) found a few as late as June 1, while (60) does not report a "last" and in all probability they nest quite regularly in the pine forests near him. The greater part of them nest in British America, and very strangely, although none nest through the central and southern part of the United States, a few regularly stay behind and nest in the West Indies!

What has been said of the movements of the Yellow-rump applies almost as well to the YELLOW RED-POLL, (*D. palmarum*.) Though wintering farther south, preferring the Southern States, and only occasionally remaining as far north as Southern Illinois, yet it soon overtakes the Yellow-rump, and together they pass up the Mississippi Valley—the Yellow-rump on the trees and the Red-poll spending most of its time on the ground. The dates of the first and last ones vary a little as would be expected, but the movements of the bulk are the same.

Among these flocks of Red-polls and Yellow-rumps will sometimes be found another Warbler, the PINE-CREEPING, (*D. pinus*.) a plain bird, and rarely numerous, but easily distinguished by its "creeping" habits. No. (30) found a single male 4-21, while (52) captured his first one 4-24, and on 5-3 found a large flock of about sixty, both male and female. These were the only ones noticed by any of the observers.

Another well known Warbler is the SUMMER YELLOW-BIRD, (*D. aestiva*.) Like most of his brethren he winters almost entirely beyond the United States, but returns about the first of March. No. (13) found it 3-5, while (6) did not see it until 4-20—and this brings up an interesting fact. Stations (6), (21), (45) and (56) are all in or near extensive prairies, and their notes show that the Warblers were from one to two weeks later in reaching them than they were at other stations in the same latitude among the timber. The explanation of course is that insect food can be sooner obtained in a well wooded country.

Passing north our Golden Warbler reached (14) on April 1, and (30) on the 18th, but (21) in the same latitude not until the 28th. Nos. (37) and (38) found them about May 1. A week later they were in northern Iowa and southern Wisconsin, and the middle of the month found a few beyond our northern border. No. (60) in the timber found them twelve days before (56) on the prairie. The bulk followed quite closely after the first ones, and passed through (30) and (21) from the 1st to the 5th of May, and through (52) from the 15th to the 17th.

These notes will apply also to the Redstart, with the exception that while the Summer Yellow-bird nests from the Gulf to and beyond our border, the Redstart withdraws from the borders of the Gulf and begins breeding a few degrees farther north. The last one left (6) on 4-15 and (13) on 4-20. The young males of last year reached (30) two weeks after the old males came. At (52) the first males—about a dozen, came 5-10. Two days later the proportion was six males to one female. On the 17th the females arrived in flocks, and the 19th was Redstart day—the species being more numerous than all the other Warblers together. Between two and three hundred were seen, the males and females being in about even numbers. Three days later all but a few summer sojourners had left.

The next group to be studied is composed of the BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, (*D. blackburniae*), BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, (*D. caerulescens*), BLACK and YELLOW WARBLER, (*D. maculosa*), BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, (*D. virens*), and the BLACK-POLL WARBLER, (*D. striata*.) These the handsomest of our Warblers, have many points of resemblance in their movements. They all pass entirely beyond the United States for the winter, except the Black-throated Blue, a few of which nest in Florida. They all journey across the entire width of our country to nest regularly in British America, though a few individuals may nest in the dense forests of Northern Minnesota. Their movements usually take place about the same time, and flocks usually contain two or three kinds, while even all five are sometimes found together. The Black-polls, as a whole, are the latest migrants, bringing up the rear of the Warbler host, but numbers can be found migrating earlier with the other Warblers. They all enter the United States about the first of March, pass very slowly up the Mississippi Valley, reaching the middle about May 1. Then as the trees put forth their leaves and insect life is rapidly multiplied, they hasten their flight, and June 1 sees most of them beyond our northern border. No. (52) is evidently in their regular track, as all five species were seen at his station, the height of the season being about May 15, which is a week or ten days later than usual. For some unknown reason the Black-throated Blue, the Blackburnian and the Black-throated Green Warblers shun the vicinity of St. Louis, and in their migrations pass it by on the other side. No. (30) did not find any of them this spring, these being almost the only ones of the thirty-six kinds which he did not observe, and he says that during six years of close study, he has only seen them a very few times. Both south and north of there they are quite common.

We may next treat in one group several Warblers which are rather southerly in their range. These are the PROTHONOTARY, (*P. citrea*), YELLOW-THROATED, (*D. dominica*), PRAIRIE, (*D. discolor*), KENTUCKY, (*D. formosa*), YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, (*I. virens*) and the HOODED WARBLER, (*M. mitratus*.) All winter entirely beyond the United States, except the Yellow-throated and the Prairie, a few of which remain in Florida; and all usually stop to breed before they reach the 39th parallel, though a few pass a little ways beyond, and the Chat has sometimes reached Minnesota. The Yellow-throated was the first one this year to reach the middle districts, reaching St. Louis 4-12 and (38) about 4-28. Next came the Hooded Warbler which (30) saw 4-17, then the Prothonotary arriving at (35) on 4-11; at (30) 4-20, but at (21) not until 5-7. A few days later the Chat made its appearance. No. (30) saw it for the first time 4-23, and on 4-26 it was quite common, about twenty-five per cent having arrived. It did not increase much from then until 5-2 and 5-3, when the bulk came. No. (38) found his first one 4-27. No. (47) says a pair nested there this summer, but are very rare in that region. No. (52) did not see one until 5-19, when a beautiful male was shot. Another was seen two days later, and was twice heard afterwards. Last of this group came the Prairie and the Kentucky Warblers, which reached Southern Illinois about the middle of April, and the limit of their northward journey about May 5.

[Continued next Month.]

RARE FINDS. J. N. Clark has found this season the following sets of eggs: Barred Owl, 2; White-bellied Nuthatch, 9; Hairy Woodpecker, Black-cap Titmouse, 6; Large-billed Water Thrush, Whippoorwill, Downy Woodpecker, Humming Bird, Hooded Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue-winged Yellow Warbler and a lot more of the commoner Connecticut species.



ALEX. WILSON.

We give above a portrait of Alexander Wilson "the American ornithologist," which we have taken from C. W. Webber's *Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters*, published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Phila., 1865. Mr. Webber was a most enthusiastic admirer of Audubon. He also admired Wilson, but never as much as Audubon. On no account would he admit that Wilson was Audubon's equal. The reputation of the illustrious Audubon was safe in his hands at least. He spoke of them always as "Hunter Naturalists."

We have tried to find the origin of the above portrait, but without success. It bears a strong resemblance to Barralet's, which is admitted by all to be the best one yet produced of Wilson, but to our way of thinking Barralet's portrait is too much dressed—too stiff for a naturalist. Certainly the inventory of Wilson's wardrobe left behind would indicate that he never owned as much clothing at one time as Barralet dresses him in. While preserving the features and profile of Wilson there is no doubt but what Barralet strained a point to make his friend appear fully as well as he ever did in life. Whoever is the author of the above portrait evidently realized the defects in Barralet's portrait and attempted to remedy them.

Wilson staid in the city from necessity alone, never from choice; his gun and the woods were his delight. The gun which Wilson carries in the portrait we have every reason to believe adorns our Sanctum where we write these notes, as the following certificate will prove:

[COPY.]

WESTCHESTER, Penn., Feb, 22, '79.

JOS. M. WADE, ESQ.,

Dear Sir—The gun I send you belonged to Alexander Wilson, the American ornithologist, and after *his* death into the possession of Wm. P. Turnbull, author of a work on the Birds of Eastern United States. At his decease I purchased this gun, with some letters, drawings, powder-horn, &c., of Wilson's, from his wife.

Thus you have this gun in a direct and well authenticated line until in your possession. Yours, truly,

WILLIS P. HAZARD,

Author of *Annals of Phila., &c., &c.*

We have also over half of Wilson's original drawings, including the first one ever drawn in colors by him, and presented to Mrs. Lawson, the wife of Alexander Lawson, the engraver of the plates for his work, and so inscribed. Besides these we have a large number of his drawings that have never been given to the public, as well as a good many of his letters, many of which have never been published.

LARGE SETS OF EGGS. Song Sparrow, 6; Maryland Yellow-throat, 6; Crow, 6; Least Tern, 4; Wilson's Tern, 4; Quail, 18; and Great-crested Flycatcher, 7.—*A. H. Helme.*

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE. — Where is the northern limit of this bird's habitat? They are common in the Chesapeake Bay in suitable localities as far north as Kent Co., Md. My friend E. G. Nicewaner has collected a number of sets of eggs at Pomona in the latter county. Fish Crows are also common there. — *Edgar A. Small, Hagerstown, Md.*

LIST OF BIRDS of Bardstown, Kentucky, containing 167 varieties extracted from the journal of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, Vol. VI, 1883, by Chas. W. Beckham.

Our scientific ornithologists met in convention in N. Y. last month to try and harmonize the nomenclature of our N. A. birds.

Hairy Woodpecker.

(*Picus villosus*.)

I have been many years collecting without having secured a set of Hairy Woodpeckers' eggs till the present season, when I have taken four complete sets.

A friend inquired of me several years ago if "the eggs of that Woodpecker which makes such a racket in the woods were desirable." He had observed a nest and the birds were very noisy and he pointed out the Hairy Woodpecker in my collection. "I'll get them for you," said he, "but I want to save the nest for Wrens to build in and will saw off the branch above and below the nest and pour out the eggs carefully." I sought to dissuade him, but he tried it and broke them all but one, the only specimen representing the species till now in my collection.

The 17th of April last, observing a pair of Nuthatches acting singularly at a wild place in the woods I sat down on a log and watched them. While sitting there a pair of Woodpeckers attracted my attention. They were very noisy, chattering vehemently as they slowly followed each other from one tree to another quite near, and in the course of fifteen minutes they moved completely around me back to the place whence they started. Very soon I heard a rapping in that direction and immediately perceived that they were excavating a nest; a very agreeable discovery to a collector who had a vacancy of that kind in his cabinet. The tree was an Elm, dead and about eight inches in diameter at the nest, which was about fifteen feet up in the trunk. I secured the set the 2d of May when incubation had just commenced. The number in the set was four, and one of the eggs was very much larger than the others, measuring in 32nds of an inch 33×23 , while No. 2 measured only 28×22 and No. 3, 29×23 . No. 4, 28×23 .

About the 1st of February my attention was attracted by some very singular bird

notes while in another section of woods, and following the sound I found a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers, and their fantastic movements and strange guttural notes were new and very interesting to me. I watched the place and the birds frequently as spring approached, promising myself a possible set of eggs as the outcome of this discovery, and I got them a little later than the set just mentioned. I had lost sight of the birds for some weeks, when one day in the same vicinity I heard the rapping of a Woodpecker's beak, following the sound, found the bird at work in an old decayed oak about eighteen feet up; no branches only a stump with the top gone. I prepared a small whip-saw and with it removed a section of the tree below the entrance large enough to insert my hand in the hole, and on the 9th of May secured a fine set of four fresh eggs from the nest. Replacing the section taken out securely the bird lingered by the nest and twelve days after I found four more eggs in it with incubation already progressing. It quite surprised me that they could replace a set so promptly.

The same day on which I found the foregoing nest, on my return through another section of woods my attention was attracted by the loud chattering of a Hairy Woodpecker, and following the sound I perceived the bird having a quarrel with some Blue Jays who were rather neighborly, and after a little quiet watching I found she was also engaged in hollowing out a tree. This time it was a Maple in full foliage, and the entrance to the nest was through wood perfectly sound and green for over an inch. The heart of the tree was decayed but it seemed scarcely possible that the bird could have chiseled the entrance through so hard a spot with her little beak. With my little whip-saw I removed a section of the tree below the entrance and found the set incomplete. Returning the section to its place and securing it there, I waited a couple of days and

obtained the set of four, fresh, crystal, clear and white. This nest was about twenty feet up. Four would appear to be the usual number laid, as each of these sets contained just that number when completed.

As this set appears to be a fair average for size, I have measured them with this result respectively in 32nds of an inch: 31×22 , 30×22 , 30×22 , 30×20 . In all the nests I observed a good degree of uniformity in form of entrance, size and depth; the entrance curving upward at first, then gracefully turning downward with plenty of room below to the depth of $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches in this one which I measured. The diameter of the entrance was $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches very nearly round, so that I could find no perceptible difference either way measured. I know of no bird more deserving of encouragement than this, though I cannot claim that they got much encouragement this spring from me. They are the only Woodpeckers that I ever saw dig out the Apple tree borer from his intrenchment in the green trunk. It seemed fitted with a very powerful beak and knows how to use it and where.—*J. N. Clark, Saybrook.*

CURIOUS NESTING PLACE. I found a Blue Jay's nest this Spring among the roots of a large tree that had been prostrated by the wind, turning up a large mass of roots with the adhering soil. Near the top of this mass, some eight feet high, under the border of the turf, which had curved over making a screen for the nest, which with its five eggs was hid from view.—*J. N. Clark.*

BLUE JAYS TAME. Last Spring I took a brood of young Blue Jays and have two of them matured and perfectly tame and interesting pets. They have their freedom, going in and out at will, spending a good deal of time hunting through the orchard. They have greatly increased my respect for the species, which I considered my duty to kill at sight, for their weakness of robbing other birds.—*J. N. Clark, Saybrook.*

Nesting Notes from Connecticut.

I found a Chipping Sparrow's nest on the limb of an apple tree containing one egg and a Cowbird's egg. I took the Cowbird's egg and in a few days after I noticed a pair of Robins building on the top of the Chipping Sparrow's nest, and when they had completed their set of four eggs I took both nests by cutting off the limb. On removing the Robin's nest it exposed two eggs which were in the Chipping Sparrow's nest. June 10th found Black and White Creeper's nest containing three young ones and a young Cow Bird and an addled egg. The nest was under an old chestnut stump in a crevice between two roots, about the same as the one you described in the O. and O. for June, 1881. June 16th I found the nest of an Indigo Bird containing four eggs. The bird that was on the nest looked like a Field Sparrow, so I shot it and it proved to be a male Field Sparrow. I saw only a female Indigo Bird. June 16th found a Black-billed Cuckoo's nest with six eggs. June 17th found set of six Long-billed Marsh Wrens that were white, spotted with brown on the large end. June 10th found a Blue Yel low-backed Warbler's nest containing three young. I cut the limb off to get at the nest. I then pulled the nest from the limb and tied it to another limb with a piece of fish line. Ten days later W. W. Coe and his hired boy found the nest. The boy climbed to the nest, and when he saw it he said: "By gosh; this nest has been blown down and the old bird has tied it on again with a piece of twine, just as good as any one could." But about that time Coe picked up the barrel of a fish line reel with some line on it, when he solved the mystery at once.—*J. L. Goff, Gildersleeve, Conn.*

MONKEY-FACED OWLS. We are having a pair of these birds engraved from a photograph taken in the South kindly sent by W. P. Tarrant of Saratoga.

Notes from San Jose, Cal.

Noticing an article on the Black Headed Grosbeak in your last number I would like to say: My observations go to prove that the male always takes a lively interest in his domestic affairs. I have on several occasions been led to the nest by his loud sweet song while sitting on the eggs. I have surprised him on the nest even before the set was completed. Also seen him covering the young, but have never seen a female in the act. The song of the male ceases when the young hatch.

April 6, 1883.—Found a nest of the Whitetailed Kite (*Elanus glaucus*) in the top of a Live Oak, built of dead twigs lined with straw. It had a cavity about three inches deep and contained four eggs of a dirty whitish yellow, thickly spotted with large chocolate and darker (almost black) spots; thickest, largest and darkest at one end. Measure, 1 24-32 × 1 11-32 inches.

April 29.—Saw a flock of eight daws Swifts (*Chaetura vauxi*).

May 8.—Found a nest of Black-capped Yellow Warbler with four fresh eggs.

May 18.—Found a nest of Macgillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis macgillivrayi*) with four half hatched eggs.

July 13.—In Stanislaus Co. found two eggs of Poor Will (*Phalacroptilus nuttalli*) on a bare hard alkali spot in a grain field. They were glossy white with small gray and bluish purple markings, about the shape and nearly the size of the Mourning Doves' eggs.—*A. L. Parkhurst, San Jose.*

Audubon.

HENDERSON, Ky., Aug. 9, 1883.

MR. JOS. M. WADE.—Remembering the interest you manifested in John J. Audubon I send you by express prepaid an ash stick taken from his mill which still stands on our river front. The timber was a part of the machinery of the grist mill, a saw-mill being also run by him in connection with the grist mill. The mill was built in

1816-17, 45 × 65 feet, four stories and a basement. The basement walls are of stone, four feet thick. The first story walls are also of stone three feet thick. The other three stories are frame. The studs are 3 × 6 and the rafters 4 × 8. There are many large timbers all of which are sound, and the house has the appearance of being good for one hundred years yet. There are a number of pieces of the grist machinery lying around in the upper story under the eaves. The building is now used as a tobacco stemmery. I enclose also two nails taken from the weather boarding which bears the impress of age. Also a note which bears his autograph as witness to a singular obligation. Also an account of J. J. Audubon & Co. vs. Bank of Henderson for lumber furnished, and an account vs. Audubon, showing that he allowed his note to go to protest. In business affairs he was not a success. These papers were kindly furnished me by Col. E. L. S—— of this place, who has just completed a history of Henderson County. It will contain some interesting incidents with which Mr. Audubon was connected. I am sure you will appreciate the relics sent. The piece of timber will make an elegant walking cane, as it is very solid and heavy and will take a high polish.

Your courtesy to myself and Mr. R—— last April and subsequent kindness to Mr. A—— were kindly appreciated.

Respectfully, W. S. J.

SOME LIKE IT, and one has faith in its continuance. E. F. Knithan, Burlington, Iowa, sends \$2 for O. and O. When told that he owed nothing, he writes: Give me credit for the amount. This pays for 1884 and 1885. Mr. K. has been with us from the beginning, and we hope he will not be disappointed.

NOTES FROM COLORADO. We have just received eighteen pages of valuable notes from an old contributor, D. D. Stone. They will appear as soon as possible.

WINTER BIRDS. Owls were unusually abundant last winter, and I mounted three Screech Owls, (two red and one gray), two Barred Owls, one Great-horned Owl and one Snowy Owl. I shot a Hermit Thrush the middle of January, and a Peabody Sparrow. There were numbers of this latter bird, and I also secured on the 16th of January a Dove, (*Zenaidura carolinensis*;) all these I consider unusual winter residents. I have seen the C. Dove taken here in winter once before. Other uncommon movements of birds have been a very large number of Pine Finches in October, and recently large flocks of Red Polls. I had brought to me about a month ago the first Rough-legged Hawk I ever knew shot here. They are our rarest Hawk.—*John N. Clark, Saybrook, Conn.*

WHITE HERONS. Where do all the White Herons, (*Herodias egretta*;) come from this season? At least seven were shot in this locality between July 23d and 27th, and about as many more seen, along the creeks. They were all in immature plumage. This is the first time they have been noticed here for several years.—*W. T. Warrick, Washington, Pa.*

CHAFFINCHES AND HORSE CHESTNUT BRANCH. We have also entered for exhibition the above picture by Wm. MacGillivray which has been described in these columns as one of the most natural, if not the most natural, drawing ever made in ornithology and botany combined.

AMERICAN DUCK HAWK. We have just had the original drawing, by Alex. Wilson, of the above bird framed to exhibit at the institute fair in this city. The figure is 10 inches long, the complete drawing being 8×14 inches. This drawing was made about 1810 by Wilson, a self-taught artist, and is a wonderful production. It is one of those rare things that has been continually pirated and as often mangled by being cheaply reduced in size.

PIGEON HAWKS. Your letter of the 18th inst. received. There is no doubt of the

identity of the Pigeon Hawks mentioned in my letter, as several others beside myself had been observing the pair for some weeks before the eggs were found. The female almost flew in my face when I found the nest. After the eggs were taken, the parents lingered in the vicinity for several days, and I shot the male, after which the female disappeared. I think that is pretty positive identification. In the Maryland and Delaware peninsula the Pigeon Hawk is resident, so I have no doubt that quite a number breed in different parts of the peninsula, though I never found more than one nest. I know their eggs are rather rare, but did not think them so much so as your letter seems to imply. During the southern migration of the Bobolinks, the Pigeon Hawks are present in large numbers—almost in flocks—as well as other large species.—*Charles D. Gibson, Renovo, Pa.*

[Desiring to make sure of the Pigeon Hawk's identity, we addressed a note to Mr. Gibson, and the above is his reply.—Ed.]

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL.

On a low bough, above the window sill,
Sang yester eve a lonely whip-poor-will;
An allegretto strain until the close,
Repeated o'er and o'er without repose.

And did he weary of the woods, and long
To pipe in haunts of men a little song
And wed it to the moonlight pale and still?
Whip-poor-will! whip-poor-will! whip-poor-will!

Ah! who was Will that he should come to woe?
Perchance, a Quaker bird—'twas long ago—
The changing years their promises fulfill
To every May is sent the whip-poor-will.

In tender shades of green the earth is drest,
The sun sifts gold around the simplest nest;
And all the birds are joyous; why must he
Mid cheery blossoms pipe a threnody?

Ah! who can tell—not all in night time sing,
Not all are larks with sunward soaring wing;
In nature's concert each his part must fill,
And the great Master taught the Whip-poor-will.

—*Boston Journal, June, '83.*

PLAIN ENGLISH. Long life and prosperity to the "O. and O." and its "Plain English" method. Montague Chamberlain is my favorite among your contributors. Wish we had a few of his kind in the south.—*J. T. P.*

ORNITHOLOGIST

— AND —

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BOSTON, NOVEMBER, 1883.

No. 11.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NOTE.—The stations and observers, to which these numbers refer, are given in the O. and O. for April.

A group of entirely different habits and of comparatively rare occurrence is composed of the Cape May Warbler, (*P. tigrina*,) Bay-breasted Warbler, (*D. castanea*,) and the Connecticut Warbler, (*O. agilis*.) These all leave the United States to winter, and pass entirely beyond it to breed; at least, we know the first two do so, and it is generally supposed that the last does also, although its nest and eggs have never yet been found. No. (30) was the only observer who saw the first two, and he found the Cape May Warbler on the 2d of May, and the Bay-breasted for the first time May 3d, and the last time both male and female were seen on the 21st of that month. Both (30) and (52) observed the Connecticut Warbler, which is the rarest regular migrant in the Mississippi Valley, during the Spring, and on the Fall return seems to shun its Spring course and passes southward through New England. No. (30) saw it on 5-14, 5-18 and the last one 5-24, while (52) procured his first specimen 5-26, and saw it three times afterward, the last being 5-29. Different in habits from the rest of their Warbler brethren are the Warbler Thrushes, the Golden-crowned Thrush, or Oven-bird, (*S. auricapillus*,) the Small-billed Water Thrush, (*S. naevius*,) and the Large-billed Water Thrush, (*S. motacilla*.) Their ranges differ widely. The bulk of all of them winter beyond our limits, though a few of the first remain in Florida, and numbers of the second are scattered over all the South-

ern States and occasionally as far north as Southern Illinois. But while the first two breed over all the Mississippi Valley, the last breeds regularly only to Middle and Northern Illinois and sometimes as far north as Southern Minnesota. The first Golden-crowns reached (30) 4-17, and passing north with medium speed (38) found them about 4-26, (52) 4-28, and (51) on 5-5, while farther west, like the other Warblers, they were somewhat later, appearing at (21) on 5-5, and (45) on 5-6. No. (30) found a nest 5-15, with three eggs and a Cowbird's, while only three days before they were just beginning to be common at (52), and the height of the season was not until 5-19. The Large-billed was the earliest of the three to migrate, arriving at Southern and Central Illinois about the 10th of April, and at (21) on the 14th, but after that, moving rather slowly, reached its usual northern limit at (41) on 5-10. It will be convenient to study five more Warblers together, not because they migrate at the same time, but because their places of wintering and breeding are the same, and their habits, during migration and even the general appearance of some of them, are alike. He must have sharp eyes who can recognize at sight, while in the trees, the Nashville Warbler, (*H. ruficapilla*,) the Orange-crowned Warbler, (*H. celata*,) and the Tennessee Warbler, (*H. peregrina*,) while the Black-capped Yellow and the Canadian Fly-catching Warblers, (*M. pusillus*) and (*M. canadensis*,) share with them a liking for low shrubs, and are not uncommonly found with them.

The first three spend the Winter in the

Southern States and the last two withdraw entirely from our country. All nest regularly in British America and more or less frequently in the northern tier of States. The Nashville Warbler was seen by (30) only on 5-2, and by (52) for the first time 5-10. Only five birds were seen before 5-19, then they were more common for a few days and the last left 5-26. The Orange-crowned is comparatively rare east of the Mississippi River. It does occur in both Illinois and Wisconsin, but was not seen this year by either (30) or (52.) The only note is from (57) of one seen 5-14, but it migrates at the same time or a little earlier than the Nashville and Tennessee and is sometimes found in their company. The Tennessee Warbler is much more common. Indeed, the banks of Mississippi seem to be its favorite Spring route. They reached (30) 4-25 and (21) 5-14. They were very numerous at (30) from 5-3 to 5-18. By 5-24 the last one was gone. No. (52) found some females 5-17, but no males until 5-22. The other two Warblers are among the last to migrate, and their passage is usually rather rapid. The Black-capped Yellow reached (21) on 5-8, (30) 5-9, and were most numerous there 5-14 to 5-18, the last one leaving 5-21. At (52) one was seen 5-12, and no more until 5-20. The height of the season was 5-21, and the last one 5-29. The Canadian Fly-catching Warbler was observed only at (52,) where it appeared 5-14 and left 5-24, and at (52) where the first one was seen 5-24 and the last 5-29. Nearly all the rest of the Warblers can be considered together. They are the Blue-winged Yellow, (*H. pinus*), the Golden-winged, (*H. chrysoptera*), the Blue Yellow-backed, (*P. americana*), the Cerulean, (*D. Cerulea*), and the Mourning Warbler, (*G. philadelphia*.) But few notes have been contributed on these species, which are, as a whole, rather southerly. All are handsome and one, the Blue Yellow-backed, is the smallest of our Warblers. All winter beyond our borders

except a few of the Blue-winged Yellow and the Blue Yellow-backed, that linger behind in Florida. The Blue-winged Yellow and the Golden-winged breed regularly from the Gulf to Northern Illinois, and casually to Minnesota, and a few of the latter to British America. They were seen only by (30) who found a few of the former in song 4-17, and of the latter, which is not common anywhere, a fine male in song was seen 5-2, and both male and female were seen on the 14th and 15th of May. The Blue Yellow-backed made its appearance at (30) 4-17, and remains to breed, from a little south of St. Louis to British America. It reached (41) 5-3. No. (52) saw it the next day, and the next day it was (57.) The Cerulean Warbler, although breeding over the whole of the Mississippi Valley was seen only by (35) who reports it on 4-11. Among the rather rare Warblers may be counted the Mourning Warbler, whose retiring habits make it difficult to find at any place. It breeds regularly to Southern Wisconsin, and occasionally to Middle Minnesota. It was first seen by (30) 5-16 and three days later at (52) where for the species it was quite abundant, having been seen more than a dozen times in as many different places.

There remains to be treated only three Warblers, and those all well known. They are the Chestnut-sided Warbler, (*D. pennsylvanica*), the Black and White Creeper, (*M. varia*), and the Maryland Yellowthroat, (*G. trichas*.) Of these the first entirely leaves the United States for the Winter; the second almost follows its example, a few remaining in Florida and some may remain even farther north, as (13) found it in December; but the last is a common Winter resident of all the Southern States. While the first does not stop to nest until Northern Illinois is reached, the other two nest from the Gulf northward. All three reach British America.

The Chestnut-sided Warbler reached (30) on 4-27, when an old male was seen,

but no more until 5-2. About the middle of the month it was most numerous, and the last one left 5-24. At (43) it came 5-5 and four days later at (44.) In the timber they moved a litter faster and appeared at (52) 5-7. The bulk of the males came 5-12, followed on the 17th by the females, the species then being at its height; two days later, on the 19th, nearly all left. A few remained to breed—about four to six pairs in as many square miles. One nest was found and the birds seen during all the month of June. Passing north (57) found them May 17, and (60) May 20, but as usual on the prairie (56) did not see them until later—May 24.

The Black and White Creeper migrated somewhat earlier. No. (35) found them for the first time on 4-10 and the next day they were quite numerous. On 4-14 the first arrived at (21,) being almost the only Warbler which was seen there before it was at (30,) at which place it did not appear until fifteen days later, on 4-29. After this they traveled faster, appearing at (41) and (52) on 5-3; at (51) and (57) on 5-7; and at (60) on 5-9. No. (45) found his first one 5-6. At both (30) and (52) they were numerous 5-5, but the height of the season at (52) was not until 5-12. The Maryland Yellow-throat was found by (13) all through the Winter, but though remaining so much farther north than most Warblers, it was no earlier in its migration. A few males came to (30) 4-17, and to (38) 4-29. No. (21) reports them 5-3; four days later (57) saw them and they reached (60) 5-12, and (56) 5-20. Some other dates, as for instance, (35) the first one on 4-30, (41) the first 5-8, and the first at (52) on 5-12, may be taken as later than the facts of the case, owing to the retiring habits of the bird and its not being sought in the marshy spots it usually frequents. At (30) 5-1 was the height of the season and four days later the transient visitors departed.—*W. W. Cooke, Ripon, Wisconsin.*

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet.

Found one set of eight slightly incubated eggs, immaculate, 58×40 , 57×43 , 54×43 , 54×43 , 54×43 , 53×42 , 55×43 , 53×49 . Nest on a low pine, in a clearing that had grown up to underbrush, three or four feet from the ground. It was pendant (contrary to Dr. Coues' Bds. of Colo. Val.) from the under side of some small branches that inclined downward and about four inches from the stem. It is much the shape of a "R. R. lunch station" coffee cup, but longer and flattened at the bottom, mainly of green moss interwoven with the fibrous outer covering of plants. This fibre also holding it to the twigs. A very few fine straws are woven into the lower end. The cavity is quite deep for its width, lined with soft shreds of burlaps and re-lined with soft feathers. Altogether it is a very soft concern. Outer height 6 inches, diameter 4 inches, inner depth $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Am sure of its identity, as I stood some time with my face close to the parent on the nest. While I was packing the nest and eggs the parents were hopping about, uttering their loud cherp, cherp, cherp, cherup, that seemed to be of too much force and volume for so tiny a creature. Right here let me make a correction to my mass of mistakes in the February O. and O'. I am not positive of ever seeing but one pair of Yellow-crowned Kinglets anywhere near here. Last year a pair of them alighted near me while at Murphy, and I took it for granted that they were all Yellow-crowns. This season I have paid considerable attention to the Kinglets, but have failed to see anything but Ruby-crowns, which are quite numerous in this locality.

August 1, watched a pair of Kinglets carrying food to their young, and soon discovered their nest in the top of a slender pine about forty feet up. Climbed up, but the top was so small it would not bear my weight. So I waited till the young had

flown and then felled the tree. This nest, also, is pensile but not exactly like the other. It is suspended from small twigs and connected to the stem by small fibers caught to the rough bark. It is of moss, fine grass, plant fiber, very small rootlets, and a few feathers loosely woven and lined with soft feathers. Outer diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, height $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, inner diameter 2 inches, depth $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

It is amusing to note their antics when a Jay happens in the vicinity of their nest. I have often been attracted some distance by their constant chirp, and find them fluttering around some sedate looking Jay, bent on obtaining its breakfast, and at short intervals pouncing down on its back as if to impress upon him their importance. In a corner of the timber near my shanty I have witnessed these proceedings several times, and it is a strong indication that their nest is not far away.—*D. D. Stone, Hancock, Colorado.*

Short-eared Owl.

This little owl, so far as my observation has extended, seems peculiar to the coast, where among the reeds and thick marshes of the shores and neighboring islands it finds a covert from the noisy world. Having found such a place they, unlike all other New England owls, build in colonies. A locality not far from here has been from my earliest recollection a breeding place for these owls. The situation is most desirable, being a meadow or flat level with the coast, over which the tide completely flows, but leaves it entirely dry when it recedes. This meadow is covered with a coarse grass and surrounded by tall brakes and reeds. In these latter they gather together the remains of last year's frost-bitten reeds and place them in a promiscuous heap on a tussock. This is afterward hollowed out and the set of eggs is then laid. Six is the largest number I ever found, with the exception of one nest, in which I found ten; but these were

laid by two females who sat together on the same nest in perfect harmony. Incubation was difficult to determine, but I cannot make it out to be more than twenty-one days. If any of your readers would be kind enough to give me the exact time it would be gratefully received. No owl is more interesting to watch. Take some dark, cloudy day in May or June, repair to their haunts and they will be found lightly skimming over the surface of the ground seeking for food left by the receding tide, or again diligently searching the immediate upland for any unwary mouse. Or watch them again in the deepening twilight, as silently, without a single note, they flit past, seeming but a passing thought or fanciful vision, until you hear from the shore the shrill cry of a Tern or Sandpiper in his talons; then you awaken to the fact that it is a rapacious bird acting well its part in nature's great drama, "The Survival of the Fittest."—*F. H. Carpenter, Rehobeth, Mass.*

CLARKE'S CROW IN SOUTHEASTERN DAKOTA. A few days ago a farmer called my attention to two, to him, strange birds eating corn in his hog pasture. I borrowed his gun loaded with buckshot, and to my surprise found the victim to be a Clarke's crow. Now the question is, what did these two strangers want here in a country so unsuited to their wants and habits? Their nearest habitat from here is 400 miles off in a bee line in the Black Hills, where they are not uncommon.—*G. Ayersborg, Vermillion, Dakota.*

AUGUST O. and O. J. N. Clark is a little incredulous about the nesting of the Greater Yellow Legs in New Jersey, saying they are abundant during migration at Saybrook, Conn. The Pigeon Hawk's nest in Delaware and the cross-bills on Long Island are equally surprising to him.

CORRECTION. In Mr. F. H. C.'s article on the Great-horned Owl, in place of two little "Buteos" read two little Bubos, &c.

Plain English

"We desire not the prostration of science, but we would strip from it the robe of omnipotence improperly assumed, and

That cold, repulsive skeleton anew would dress,
Then warm it into life and loveliness."—*Prof. Hosford.*

Is not always pleasant but it is sometimes necessary to bring us to our senses, and we have a small dose of it which we will administer sugar-coated in behalf of the little fellows that are growing up and will soon be among us giving us old stagers ideas of observations we never dreamed of.

Some years ago there was an ornithological association formed in Cambridge, Mass., which has not accomplished the task it set out to do, and for several reasons—1st. It has been too exclusive—too much of the Pharisee order—it has ignored the "bone and sinew" of our beautiful science, and it could not saw its own wood. 2d. It has hung out false colors. It advertised year after year that it was the "only, &c.," until we gently reminded them that the world would notice it when the sign was taken in. 3d. It has announced as its editors, Prof. S. F. Baird and Dr. Elliott Coues. We, as a corresponding member, have ventured to protest against this deception. We were told that Prof. Baird would not like it if his name was removed, and that it had a good effect abroad, &c., &c. One member informed us that "*all*" the proof was submitted to Dr. Coues. We cannot contradict this, but outsiders don't believe it, and all of this is a load that the Nuttall Club has failed to carry to its destination. A meeting of the most exclusive kind has recently been held in New York. And this convention of scientists have named their new society "The American Ornithological Union." The mistake is, it is not American, and it is formed too much on the principle of our city social clubs where each member carries a Yale key. It won't work in science, gentlemen; all nature belongs to all men. You sadly mistake the importance of this mission. It matters little what you call him,

the Blue Jay screams just as loud for rich and poor, for boy and man alike. It is a mystery to us why the names of our birds should be such a bone of contention. It always reminds us of a lawyer discovering during a trial a nice point of law and forgetting that he has a client to look after. We are told that great harmony prevailed and that the disturbing element that has existed so long in our science has calmed down like a bright May morning.

Boston has six members while the State of Yale and Dr. Wood, Coe, Sage and Clark were ignored. R. I. was too small to be remembered; all birds passing through R. I. will be expected to stop at Cambridge and register, and yet the State of Rhode Island is big enough to hold our friend Jencks, and occasionally a rare bird gets one wing over the State. There were six members from Mass., four from Washington, seven from New York, one each from Oregon, Louisiana, Iowa, and Maine, two from Canada, and J. M. Wheaton from Ohio, whose last work should be read by all seeking advanced knowledge. Prof. Maynard seems to have been overlooked, and yet he was studying bird life when many of the present members were toddling around in petticoats. We do not agree with Maynard, but we recognize his right all the same, and fortunately no Union can curtail that right. We are sorry to say he is not well and will winter in the tropics, and as the Union is not represented south of New York the birds will not have heard of it. This purely American? Union did not consider the editor of this paper and all his correspondents as worthy of a seat in the gallery even—but we believe some of them were elected corresponding members, which means that they will be allowed to study bird life and send their notes to some member who will condescend to assume the honor of editing, and yet the birds come and go with the season.

The convention was unique. It brought together a remarkable body of men

that nothing else could have done. There was Prof. S. F. Baird, who to our regret and great loss gave up his first love and went a fishing. There was that model scientist Geo. N. Laurence, not "American," but of the world. The learned Allen from Cambridge was there who gives us the technical "straight." The Doctors were there in force. Dr. Shufeldt from La., who commences to study our game birds just where we like to leave them. Dr. J. B. Holden and Dr. A. K. Fisher, Sing Sing, N. Y., who reads the O. and O. and of course keeps posted, and Dr. Edgar A. Mearns of Highland Falls, N. Y., who wrote a good thing on the Birds of N. Y., and forgot to send a copy to this office. Dr. C. Hart Merriam was there a moving spirit. His style and accuracy will tell in the secretary's chair. The hard working Dr. Elliott Coues was there, whose graceful pen and kindness of heart has led him to endorse men who were n. g. in the science. Brewster of Cambridge, Purdie from under the gilded dome, and Chamberlain from over the border was there, and many others not well known to us as they are not advanced enough in ornithology to read the latest news from the bird world in the O. and O.

Robert Ridgway, who has so carefully corrected the errors in O. and O., was there. The boys in the west noticing this trait have honored a newly formed club with his name; and may its constitution be like the science it advocates, broad enough to admit all honest workers on this continent. The ornithologist and oologist of this generation, Capt. Chas. E. Bendire, left Fort Klamah, Oregon, on receipt of notice of the meeting, and reached New York at 7 a. m. on the morning of the day of the meeting. While others are wasting valuable time over the name of a bird, the Captain has been raking in the birds and eggs to an extent little thought of. Although stationed in the wilderness he is better posted on eastern collections than

any other man. The following officers were elected: Pres. J. A. Allen; Vice Pres., Dr. Elliott Coues and Robert Ridgway; Sec. and Treas., Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Locust Grove, N. Y.

NATURE is truth. SCIENCE is a method of describing nature with the pen. ART is nature transferred to canvas by mechanical means. Science and art are necessary to bring nature to our firesides regardless of nature's wars outside, and also to teach the student who is not endowed with the faculties of observation.

DOWNY WOODPECKER. Late in October, 1882, a Downy Woodpecker excavated a hole in an old cherry tree, near a much used door in my yard, of the size and shape of its usual nest, and occupied it nightly for more than six weeks. In April following a pair of Bluebirds took possession and reared two broods of five birds each; but now, October 2d, '83, the Woodpecker has occupied his old quarters for several nights and frequents the locality during the day. This habit of the Downy in making a winter home is a new one to me.—*John M. Howey, Canandaigua, N. Y.*

LEAST BITTERN. While collecting on a large marshy meadow in this vicinity on June 10th, 1883, I started a Least Bittern from a clump of flags. Thinking there might be a nest there, I commenced searching and soon found it. It was a mere hollow in a bunch of matted flags scantily lined with water grass, and contained two fresh laid eggs. In shape and size they resembled eggs of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. In color they were of pale blue, almost white. Fearing other collectors might find them I took them, though probably not a complete set. I also secured the bird. I afterwards secured three more finely plumaged males on the same meadows, which are now in my cabinet.—*Charles H. Neff, Portland, Conn.*

Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio is delayed for want of fresh nests and eggs to draw. This is a work of sterling merit.

The Hawks of '83,

The first March walks in the woods showed that many of the old hawks' nests were "winter killed?". Weakened and disintegrated by the action of the constant snow and ice, they had been tumbled from the trees by the last fierce breath of winter. So at the outset it was clear that to secure the annual complement of eggs would involve wider and closer search than usual. Though shadowing them closely, I was finally baffled as to the nesting-places of several pairs of these evicted hawks, and the season's work gave but eighty eggs against over 100 for the year before. Still the hawks were as common as ever and will continue so, doubtless, as long as their chief quarry the red squirrel is so abundant here. In this series the sets of Red-tailed were all in pairs, and the Red-shouldered all in trios—the Red-tailed of course being larger and less showily marked. In average sets of *boréalis* one egg will be plain and the other nearly so, while in a large series of Red-shouldered there will be some half dozen types constantly recurring, many gradations, and a few sets of absolute brilliancy. Though the season was cold and late, the Red-tailed bred as early as usual, while its congener showed itself as heretofore affected by extreme weather in the breeding season.

In blowing the incubated eggs of *B. lineatus*, three sets were found which held one stale egg each. It is not clear that cold or wet caused this, but it is true that a wet season makes the Buteo's eggs dull and nest-stained. A single heavy rain, occurring when the clutch is just laid, affects their brightness and beauty. And full sets suffer by comparison with single eggs taken when laid, as every day of exposure fades all hawk's eggs. So the series of '83 is uninteresting and dull as a whole, while '82, which was a dry season, presents a uniformly showy lot. To remove nest-

stains is not easy. If freshly laid the markings will at once wash out of the eggs of Fish Hawks and Buteos, so the corner of a damp cloth only should be used on the plain surface between the markings. Dr. Wood says soap and water are cheap and should be freely used. But as eggshells are porous, soap is at once absorbed in the shell and afterwards when heated comes out over the surface in yellow, waxy exudations.

The Buteo's eggs of this season were all from the old haunts of last year, and presumably most of them were from hawks' which had been often robbed. I also took sets of Cooper's Hawks and Marsh Hawks from old birds grown wary by the loss of many clutches. Tuesday, June 26, I took a set of three bright eggs of Sharpshinned Hawk from a new nest in a secluded swamp after leaving them vainly seven days for a larger set. A pair of Sharpshinned with unfledged young were shot in a hemlock clump within the city limits, in July this year, by milkmen, who nailed the hapless family on the side of a barn as scare-crows. Now, if I had only gone through the grove in June, as I always have done in former years, the old birds might be alive to-day, and my collection the richer by one more set of Sharpshinned hawk's eggs.—*J. M. W., Norwich, Conn.*

DOWNY WOODPECKER. Late in October, 1882, a Downy Woodpecker excavated a hole in an old cherry tree, near a much used door in my yard, of the size and shape of its usual nest, and occupied it nightly for more than six weeks. In April following a pair of Bluebirds took possession and reared two broods of five birds each; but now, October 2d, '83, the Woodpecker has occupied his old quarters for several nights, and frequents the locality during the day. This habit of the Downy in making a winter home is a new one to me.—*John M. Howey, Canandaigua, N. Y.*

Baltimore Oriole.

On looking over some of the back numbers of the O. and O., I noticed a query as to the adaptability of the Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) to cage life. I happen to be in a position to answer that, when taken young, and when a reasonable amount of care is bestowed on it, it makes an excellent cage bird. I know of one which was taken from the nest in July, 1879, and he is apparently as healthy and happy as any of his confreres, who are in the full enjoyment of their liberty. He is quite tame, and very fond of his mistress, and he shows his affection plainly by his manner when she approaches his cage. He will eat almost anything, but he is particularly fond of hard boiled egg, bread and finely chopped meat. He has also a great partiality for fresh fruit; but if that cannot be obtained, he takes very kindly to any kind of preserves, as a substitute. He will eat all kinds of bird-seed, if previously bruised with a rolling-pin, but not otherwise. He has never known an hour's illness; his song is as loud, clear and varied as that of any Oriole I have ever heard, and he sings continually. During our long and severe Winter great care is necessary to prevent the Orioles suffering from the cold, and for this reason an old shawl is thrown over his cage every evening, and removed in the morning. He has got so used to this that during the cold weather he watches for the shawl every night, and refuses to go to sleep without it. But the most remarkable thing about him is that he is in beautiful plumage, with not a feather soiled or broken, although his cage is not a particularly large one.—*W. L. Scott, Ottawa, Canada.*

ROSE-BREADED GROSEBEAK. Dec. 21, 1882, Jack sang his full notes for the first time; on the 26th sang his canary notes, while bunched up like a sick bird, as usual; sang several times through January, and soon got into his full notes, and sang as loud as ever, it being his fifth year. July 6, when

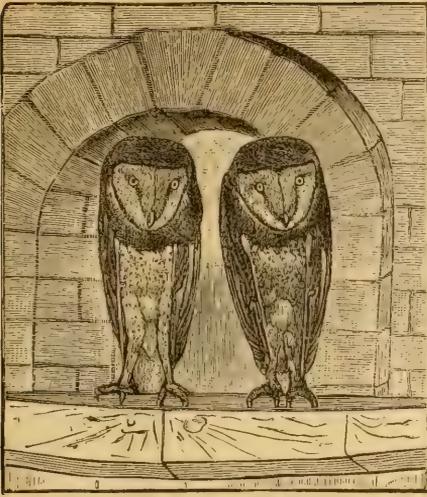
in his prime, he was stolen from his cage on the piazza. We found him in a bird store in the city and bought him back. It was a severe strain on him; he was not so lively afterward, but sang up to October. To-day, Nov. 22, 1883, he is in as fine condition as he ever was, but not in song. He will consume nearly his full weight in celery each day, besides his regular feed.

NATURE is truth. SCIENCE is a method of describing nature with the pen. ART is nature transferred to canvas by mechanical means. Science and art are necessary to bring nature to our firesides regardless of nature's wars outside, and also to teach the student who is not endowed with the faculties of observation.

A NEW SPECIES OF OSTRICH. Dr. Reichenow, the ornithologist, of the Berlin Museum, describes a new ostrich, under the name of *Struthio molybdophanes*. A living example is in the Zoological Gardens at Berlin. The habitat of this species is stated to be the deserts of Somali Land and the Western Galla Country, extending on the east coast of Africa from 10 deg. N. lat. to the Equator.—*Land and Water.*

LEAST BITTERN. While collecting on a large marshy meadow in this vicinity on June 10th, 1883, I started a Least Bittern from a clump of flags. Thinking there might be a nest there, I commenced searching and soon found it. It was a mere hollow in a bunch of matted flags scantily lined with water grass, and contained two fresh laid eggs. In shape and size they resembled eggs of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. In color they were of pale blue, almost white. Fearing other collectors might find them, I took them, though probably not a complete set. I also secured the bird. I afterwards secured three more finely plumaged males on the same meadows, which are now in my cabinet.—*Charles H. Neff, Portland, Conn.*

GREAT BLUE HERON. I had the good fortune to shoot a specimen on Nov. 7.—*L. R. Rich, Saratoga, N Y.*



“Monkey-Faced Owls.”

Enclosed please find a photograph of a pair of Owls which have been on exhibition here for two or three weeks. The owner says they are the only pair in the United States of North America, and are native birds of Tartary. The photo is a very fair representation. He calls them “Monkey-faced Owls.” The bill proper is very small, but the mouth extends almost to the eyes. Eyes as near as I could see were very small. Iris dark hazel. Back dark brown, marked very finely, breast speckled with brown, bill blackish, crown finely mottled, no tufts, tarsi long. Two pair were taken at the fort at St. Augustine, Florida, last February. One pair was bought for some scientific institute in Ohio but escaped. P. T. Barnum, the man says, offered him \$500 but he refused.

If they are American birds they are a cross of Barn Owl and something else.—
W. P. Tarrant, Saratoga.

A specimen of the “Monkey-faced Owl,” a rare bird, was recently captured by Captain Pitts, of Orlando, Fla., in the Everglades. It is described as being somewhat smaller than the Hooting Owl. The plumage has the soft, furry texture of the owl family, but a tinge of orange enters into the color. The head and face are those of a baboon, the face being white, while the eyes are much smaller than those of an owl of the same size, coal-black and somewhat almond-shaped, opening and closing with lids like those of an animal. In fact, they more nearly resemble the eyes of an otter than a bird.—*Ex.*

Interesting Notes.

The article in September O. and O. about Flying Squirrels reminded me of my experience with a tame Gray Squirrel that I had last year. I had a number of stuffed birds standing on the mantel in my room, unprotected. The *Sciurus* had the run of the room, and one day took it into his head to gnaw off the bills of every bird he could find. He must have eaten them, for I could find no trace of them anywhere, and I was afraid at first he had poisoned himself, but no evil effects followed. One day while out collecting I saw a Kingbird engaged in a fight with a Great-crested Flycatcher, and in a few moments the latter fell to the ground completely exhausted, and probably injured internally, as I could find no marks on it except a badly bunged eye. I took it home and placed it in a cage open at the top, and after a few minutes absence, returned just in time to find that Master *Sciurus* had climbed into the cage, killed the bird and was engaged in gnawing its bill, ruining its value as a specimen, for which I had intended it. After that I was careful to leave no birds where he could get at them.

In the summer of last year I found a nest which I have never been able to identify, as no bird was near. It was in New Castle Co., Del., and was placed in the centre of a clump of hazel bushes, growing in a swamp, so that I had to wade at least fifty yards before reaching it. It resembled a Wood Thrush's nest, being built of mud, but was an inch deeper than any nest of that kind I ever saw. The diameter was about the same. It was placed about two feet above the water and contained four eggs, much like a runt Catbird's egg, and of a dark blue color, with a slight greenish cast. The latter is hardly distinguishable when placed beside a Catbird's egg. Now can any reader of O. and O. tell me what bird it belongs to? It was not a case of a Catbird laying in an old nest, for I had been through that same

thicket several times before, and would have seen it. If any one can cite an instance of a Catbird building a mud nest, that may solve the question, and the slight differences in size, shape and color might be passed over as accidental. In visiting a colony of Purple Grackles I found another curious set. There is no doubt of their identity for I saw the female on the nest, which was a common P. G's nest. There were four eggs; three of them dark brown, scratched, mottled and blotched all over with darker brown. The fourth was a light olive green, with large blotches of light brown or bronze. There were no scratches of any kind on this egg and all the colors were very light, though entirely different from a normal Grackle egg, as well as from the other three. An experienced collector to whom I showed one of the dark eggs (without telling its history) pronounced it a Nighthawk's (*Chordeiles popetue*) egg. I don't suppose this is a new species, but it certainly is a curious freak of nature.

I would like to correct a couple of the printer's errors in my note on the Pigeon Hawk's nest in O. and O. for September. The date, "March 2" should read "March 22," and in the sentence "marked unevenly with five dots of reddish brown" read "fine dots."—*Charles D. Gibson, Renovo, Pennsylvania.*

A SURPRISED BLUEJAY.—At the back end of my store, and just outside of a window, is a box on which we mix the dough to feed the chicks. On Sunday morning when I shaved myself I took my mirror to the window so I could have a good light. Just as I finished my work I noticed an old Bluejay drop down on the box and begin eating the dough from the pan of chicken feed. As I was on the opposite side of the glass it did not see me. I looked at it for a moment and then "for fun" turned the mirror around so the glass would face the bird. It was just taking a mouthful of dough as it looked up and saw, as it sup-

posed, another Jay with its mouthful also. It seemed greatly astonished and failed to swallow its food for some time, but soon did so, and then in Bluejay style "bowed," as much as to say "good morning, sir." As a matter of course the glass made the other Jay bow also, and the next salutation was "kechunk! kechunk!" I suppose that is Jay language, but I do not understand it. Then it proceeded to fill its mouth full of dough again and its shadow did the same. This seemed to anger it very much, and after giving one Bluejay war-whoop, it flew against the glass. Its astonished look at the result of its attack was laughable. The first thing it did was to retreat to the farther side of the box, and from there eye the antagonist. After gazing for some time its hunger overcome it and it took another mouthful, "as did its shadow." The Jay stopped with full mouth, turned its head first one way then the other, and finally hopped around the glass and stood face to face with me. Our faces were not more than six inches apart, and I never expect to see a more astonished look than was in its eyes just then. But one look was enough; and after another big Jay yell it made as good time from there as a Bluejay ever made, I guess; and my dough has remained undisturbed ever since.—*S. H. L., McLeanborough, Ill., in Germantown Telegraph.*

RIDGWAY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB. A meeting of the Ornithologists of Chicago was held on Friday, September 7, and an organization effected. The society adopted the name of The Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago, in honor of Mr. Robert Ridgway, Curator of Ornithology at the United States National Museum. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and officers were duly elected as follows: President, Dr. J. W. Velie; Vice-President and Treasurer, George F. Morcom; Secretary, H. K. Coale; Curator, Joseph L. Hancock; Librarian, F. L. Rice.

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BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1883.

No. 12.

Mississippi Valley Migration.

NOTE.—The stations and observers, to which the numbers refer, are given in the O. and O. for April.

Upon taking account of stock I find that notes have been contributed on 256 species of birds. Of these forty-four have already been treated of, at length, in this magazine, leaving 212 yet to be noticed. As quite a large portion of these have only two or three notes to the species, and hence are of comparatively little value in studying migration, and as it would obviously be impossible to treat of this large number in the space of the remaining number of this year, I have selected forty of the more common birds and even the notices of these will have to be so condensed as to be little more than a copy of the notes received, with some additional matter on the wintering and breeding places of the several species. There will then have been treated eighty-four species, a study of whose movements last Spring will, it is hoped, serve as a guide to the proper time to watch for their arrival and departure, and also help to awaken an interest in the whole subject of migration. In the following notes F will be used to denote the first one seen. We will consider the species in order, as they occur in the Smithsonian catalogue, beginning with the

OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH, (*H. u. swainsoni*.)

This bird is usually considered as wintering beyond our borders, with a few stray ones remaining in the Southern States, but (35) says, "During the past Winter I repeatedly found this bird wintering in thickety ridges in the Mississippi bottomland. I saw from five to twenty per day,

every day I was collecting in said thickets, regardless of the weather." No. (13,) however, did not see any until 2-5, and on 4-25 they were still present with him. No. (6) says, "Do not occur." No. (21) 5-10 F; (30) 4-26 F, two seen, and no more until 5-2, when the bulk arrived, not shy and singing a little; 5-5 height of the season; 5-10 still present; 5-14 to 18 quite numerous; 5-24 last. No. (52,) Have lost my record of F, but 5-3 a second one seen; 5-12 met quite often in company with the Tawny Thrush; about height of season. During the next week the bulk departed. On 5-19 three seen; 5-24 as numerous as any time this Spring; 5-31 last. No. (60) sends the following note: "4-14 F and 4-22 height of the season, although three inches of snow fell that day. About all gone by 4-27." This would be very early for the Olive-back and probably refers to the Hermit Thrush. From (60) northward the Olive-back remains to breed.

CATBIRD, (*G. carolinensis*.) Winters in Southern States and breeds from the Gulf to British America. Mr. Ridgway gives it as a Winter resident in Southern Illinois, but (35) says he has never seen them until Spring really began, and that the people in general think their presence indicates Spring. No. (16) says they do not occur there in Winter. None were seen in Central Illinois at (30) until 4-18, one seen, silent and in high plumage; 4-22, slight increase and singing; 4-29, are still comparatively quiet and scarce; 5-1, scarce—a morning's walk reveals less than half a dozen; 5-2, bulk arrived and many migrating flocks; 5-3, many more came last

night. No. (42) had before this found his first one on 4-27, and (38) on 4-29, but from the time the bulk arrived at St. Louis they spread rapidly, reaching (21) 5-4, (45) 5-6, and the same day at (52) and (47.) No. (44) did not see them until 5-9, and they had reached (60) 5-12, and (56) saw his first 5-14. All of this migration was rather later than usual. At (52) it was at least two weeks behind time; but consequently the bulk followed very close to the van. The day after the first came twenty per cent were present, and three days later, 5-10, brought the bulk; height of the season was 5-12 to 19.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, (*R. calendula*.) winters in Southern States and occasionally a little further north; breeds from the extreme northern part of the United States northward. No. (35) did not see a single individual the whole Winter. The northward movement reached Southern Illinois about April 1st, but either the bird is so small that it was not noticed by some until long after it arrived, or else its movements are very irregular. Probably both causes have operated to give us the very irregular notes which follow: No. (30) 4-4 F; 4-9 to 4-12, height of season; 4-17, only two seen; 4-27, still present; 5-1, one pair; 5-3, last. No. (32) 4-23 F; (37) 4-11 F, five seen; (45) 4-25 F, six seen; (51) 4-5 F; (52) 4-11 F, seven seen, three of them in song; (47) 4-10 F; (57) 4-17 F, a few; 5-3, saw two males and one female picking larvæ out of a small pine tree; (60) 4-12 F. The full record of (52) is 4-13, height of the season; about seven birds to the mile; bulk departed 4-14 or 15. On 4-28 visited a tamarac swamp a few miles distant. There the Ruby-crowns were in their glory. The swamp was full of them. I counted twenty-three in front of me at one time; and the rest of the swamp seemed to be just as full. As this was only one of many such swamps within a mile, the total number of Ruby-crowns must have been very great. All were in song and very

active. April 26 the first female was seen, and from then the number of those without the red crest increased very rapidly until on 5-3, though still quite numerous, not more than ten per cent had an ornamental topknot. At 11 p. m., 5-5, one came to my window and tried to get in, acting as if attracted by my light, and scared by the thunder, lightning and evident signs of an approaching tempest. May 7 nearly all gone, only seven seen; 5-12, one-fourth as many in tamarac as on 5-5; 5-21, last one regularly, but a stray one was seen 5-28.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, (*R. satrapa*.) This handsome little gad-about is hardier than his more musical brother, the Ruby-crown, and can be found during the Winter all the way from the Gulf to Northern Iowa; though rather rare north of Southern Missouri except in favored localities. No. (35) seems to be in such a locality. He says: "I met this little fellow almost every day that I was in the bottom lands. I would see on an average twenty-five per day and often associated with the Tufted Titmouse; no weather seemed cool enough to cool his spirit. The Winter record of (30) is that on Jan. 6 two pairs were met in different places, and no more seen from then to March 1, two pairs in same places. The same irregularity is noted in the notes on the migration of this species as in the preceding. No. (30) 4-4 F of the transient visitors and 4-10 last; (41) 4-15 F; (51) 4-7 F; (57) 4-5 F; (52) 4-4 F, five seen in one piece of woods; 4-9, more numerous; 4-10, height of the season, about eight to the mile; 4-12, bulk departed; 4-14 to 4-26, seen occasionally, one or two at a time; 4-26, last.

BROWN CREEPER, (*C. f. rufa*.) Wintering apparently over nearly all if not the whole of the Mississippi Valley, but not often seen. It is most common and conspicuous during migration, and though said to breed from the Gulf to British America, at most stations it comes in the Spring, is common for a few days, and then

no more are seen. The bulk of the species evidently migrate to the far North. Nos. (21,) (30,) (35,) (37,) (41) and (58) report it as a Winter resident; (35) says he saw from none to ten per day; (30) saw the first of the transient individuals 4-4; most numerous from 4-5 to 4-9, and 4-9 was the last seen; (45) 4-17 F; (51) 4-4 F; (52) 4-4 F, two seen; bulk left about 4-11 and last one on 4-15; (47) 4-2 F; (60) 4-12 F, six seen.

HOUSE WREN, (*T. ædon*.) Winters in extreme Southern States and breeds throughout the Valley. It was seen at (30) for the first time 4-17, and again next day; 4-22, this morning, shows an increase; 4-29 is an industrious songster and mating. No. (21) 4-14 F; 4-29, our Summer visitors are here in full numbers; (37) 4-16 F; (38) 4-22 F; (44) 5-1 F; (41) 5-10 F; (45) is at this place a very rare bird; (51) 5-4 F; (52) 5-2 F, one found singing with its accustomed spirit and perseverance. Was joined two days later by another, and on 5-6 two more came; 5-7, spread more, but very few yet; 5-10, still increasing, but not many; 5-12, no more increase, Summer numbers, not more than ten pairs around town; (55) 4-28 F. This bird is remarkable as being almost the only one which reached the prairie stations before it appeared at timber stations in corresponding latitudes.

RED-EYED VIREO, (*V. olivaceus*.) Winters for the most part beyond the United States, a few remaining in Florida; breeds all the way up to our northern boundary. No. (13) 2-3 F; (35) 4-11 F, heard one; 4-12, singing on all sides; (30) 4-25 F, again 4-27 single individuals in song; 5-2 and 5-3 bulk came; (21) 5-5 F, abundant; (52) 5-19 F, several seen, but probably came some days before. About in full numbers after 5-25; breeds abundantly; many nests found.

WHITE-BELLIED SWALLOW, (*T. bicolor*.) Winters in Southern States, breeds throughout the Valley. This is the hardiest of

the Swallows and the first to migrate in the Spring. Its movements, being to a large extent dependent on the weather and the food supply, are quite irregular. A small party seem this Spring to have been especially anxious to proceed north, having appeared at (52) on 4-4, which was twenty-two days earlier than they appeared at St. Louis, and just a month before they were seen at (51,) only a few miles distant; and they had reached (57) on 4-14, before they had been noticed by any other station except (52.) The record is: No. (30) 4-26 F, a migrating party; (21) 4-28 F, here a rare Summer visitor; (38) 4-20 F; (41) 5-6 F; (54) 5-1 F; (52) 5-4 F, three flying and circling over the Rock River at 3 p. m. Had not seen any in the early part of the day, though I was out all the forenoon; 4-7, four more have come; 4-9, more numerous; most numerous 4-26; 5-7, have nearly all gone in the last two days; 5-8, quite a large flock arrived last night; 6-1, seen every day; (57) 4-14 F, a flock over the water.

SCARLET TANAGER, (*P. rubra*.) Winters beyond our border and breeds throughout the Valley. The following notes, from stations situated near timber, show quite a steady progression; all of them are for first ones seen: No. (35) 4-17, (30) 4-27, (41) 5-3, (52) 5-11, (60) 5-20. The prairie stations show more irregularity: No. (21) 5-12, (44) 5-20, (47) 5-10, no females yet; (56) 5-17. No. (42) says he saw one on 3-1, and no more afterward until 5-16. After (30) saw his first one, 4-27, no more appeared until 5-2, and on 5-3 the first females came. At (52) the second one was seen 5-12, and 5-17 doubled in numbers last night; 5-19, first females and males a little more numerous; 6-1, young males have come but no building yet.—*W. W. Cooke, Ripon, Wis.*

JER FALCON, killed at Point Judith, Rhode Island, during the month of October.—*Jencks.*

Change of Ownership.

After the completion of this volume the O. and O. will pass into the hands of Frank B. Webster of Pawtucket, R. I., who will increase its size to twelve pages and will push it as a business venture, and give it more time than we have been able to lately, and we ask for him your continued and earnest support, for no one will continue its publication as we have done. It should have a largely increased patronage both in subscribers and advertising.

Most of our readers are aware that with us it has been merely a hobby to fill up our leisure (?) hours and in this way do what good we could for the science. We have had no other object in view, and it will always be a pleasure to us to look back and remember the assistance we have given the boys. It is our innate nature to assist, but never to ask assistance.

Our duties as an Editor on the *Boston Journal of Commerce*, and with four technical books in preparation on wool and the manufacture of woolen goods, and as representative of the Texas Wool Grower in the East, makes this course absolutely necessary. We are fifty-one years old, have never sought a vacation, not even for one day, since we commenced a business career in 1850; we have for many years devoted from fifteen to eighteen hours to business and our hobby for 365 days each year, and it is time to slack up.

We part with our hobby with regret, but shall still commune with our old friends through its pages, and we sincerely thank all who have so cheerfully contributed to its contents, making volumes VI, VII and VIII invaluable to the coming ornithologist and oologist.

BIRDS OF KANSAS. A catalogue of the Birds of Kansas by N. S. Goss has reached us, which contains a list of 320 birds with a supplementary list of twenty-nine to be looked for. Kansas is well to the front in ornithological labors.

MIGRATION. In closing Volume VIII we desire to say a good word for W. W. Cooke of Ripon, Wis., who has so thoroughly conducted the observations of the migration of the Mississippi Valley. A work of much labor and honor, and the team of observers under Mr. Cooke deserve great praise for the faithful manner in carrying out and recording their observations.

BELL'S VIREO. We tender our thanks to D. E. Lantz of Manhattan, Kansas, the home of many friends to the O. and O., for a fine nest and full set of eggs of the above Vireo.

OUR PRINTER. With this number we close our labors with our printer, which have been of the pleasantest kind. The O. and O. has appeared regularly, and, considering the price paid, is a piece of work for all to be proud of. It has been printed in a model office, where every man does his duty without "bossing," and "*Cooley's Weekly*" reaches its 7,000 readers (with all the news and crammed with locals) with great regularity each week for only "fifty cents a year and no postage." We congratulate our readers on the fact that "*Cooley*" will continue the printer of our favorite O. and O.

NOTES FROM MANHATTAN, KAN.—Four sets of pure white eggs of the Bluebird were taken here this season—1883.

The Blue Grosbeaks nested here abundantly this year.

April 14th, took a set of seven Crow's eggs. The earliest complete set noticed was March 26th.

March 31st, first set of Long-eared Owl's.

At the second nesting all the Ground Robins [chewink] built in bushes from three to six feet up.

June 5th, a Bald Eagle's nest was seen in an immense cottonwood tree. I could not reach it.—*D. E. Lantz.*

DUCK HAWKS. Fred T. Jencks, Providence, R. I., received two Duck Hawks, killed on Point Judith.

Screech Owls Breeding in Confinement.

June 4th, 1881, I found in a hollow tree in an orchard a family of Screech Owls, consisting of an adult and four young. The plumage of the old bird was red, that of the young grayish brown. Carrying my captives home I consigned them to an old store room, and during the summer I fed them exclusively on frogs, and it was no small job to procure a sufficient quantity. They seemed to prefer them to any other food, which led me to believe that they constituted no mean portion of their regular fare when at liberty.

During the Fall of that year I disposed of the young, and at about the same time I was presented with another adult of the same species, also in the red plumage, by a hunter who said he had found it in the same orchard in which I had found mine.

During the winter I secured the use of a long closed shed, or hay barn, which I separated into three apartments by wire netting. Into this building I introduced my Owls—Barred, Great horned and Screech, giving the *Scops* the middle section. Nothing unusual in their demeanor was noticed during the season of 1882, except that they did not seem to take any notice of each other whatever. They would eat meat refuse of any kind, if it was not salt, and the barn being overrun with mice I often found dead ones lying about, and no doubt they caught many of them.

About the first of February, 1883, their actions towards each other began to change. Instead of snapping at one another for a bit of meat, I was quite surprised to see one of them take a bit of food and carry it to the other one that was perched on the topmost beam, which in turn gravely received it. Up to this time I had no idea as to the sex of my birds, as both were alike, but judging from the fact that the bird which I had found was on the nest with young, I took it for granted to be a female, and latterly noticing the polite attentions paid

to her by the other owl, I thought possibly that it was a male. These attentions seemed to increase. They would sit as close together as possible, frequently preening each other's feathers. The male bird (I was sure of it by this time) would take a piece of meat and fly up with it to his companion, lay it down, and invite her to take it by a series of hops and bows.

All this I could observe by peeping through a knot hole in a box caddy, where I could come in from the outside. The barn I kept dark as possible. I could but just see. This of course greatly facilitated the owls in their movements. By the last of March I noticed a heap of straws and chaff on the top of a corner post of my division line, well under the eaves, and both owls sitting there. I did not disturb them to examine as I had my hopes and did not want to trouble my pets too much at first. On the 13th of April I first noticed a different demeanor on the part of the male. He was more on the move, continually snapping at the Great-horned, and Barred Owls, if they happened to come near the division netting, which in their perambulations about their compartment they frequently did, which kept the Screech owl pretty well on the alert. Thinking I might now with safety explore, on the 15th I took a ladder and ascended to the nest, where I was immensely gratified to find a clutch of three eggs, the female showing no alarm, allowing me to move her gently from the nest.

Too much cannot be said in praise of *Scops* as a faithful husband and guardian. Wishing to test him a little I took my Long-eared Owl and put him into their enclosure. *Scops* was sitting on his perch trying to catch a few winks, but every few seconds shooting a shy, sidelong glance to see if Messrs. *Bubo* and *Strix* were acting properly. In one of these glances he caught sight of *Asio* who was at that moment sitting on the ground. He stretched out his neck and then—swift

as an arrow and noiseless as a floating feather, he struck out for the intruder, knocking him over on the ground. For a moment it was a confused heap of chaff and owls, then they parted and looked each other squarely in the eye, then *Scop* with one wing drawn out before his head advanced sidelong to renew the attack. Not wishing to provoke hostilities further I removed *Asio* from the enclosure, and right glad was he to come.

The young *Scops* are at this date, Oct. 27, just commencing to come out in red plumage, having a number of feathers so streaked on their back and wings. As I should have previously mentioned incubation occupied in this case only twenty-two days. I have never heard of these owls breeding in captivity before, yet if they or any other species have done so, a record of such would be appreciated by—*F. H. Carpenter, Rehobeth, Mass.*

Snow Buntings and Pileated Woodpeckers.

During a tramp over the mountains north of this place early in October I saw large flocks of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophanes nivalis*) and was informed by a "native" that they were to be found all through the spring and summer. Strong circumstantial evidence in favor of their breeding there, if he told the truth—and I have no reason to doubt it. It is certainly cold enough out there, even in mid-summer to suit the most Boreal bird of my acquaintance. I also saw two Pileated Woodpeckers, (*Hylotomus pileatus*.) I think they were wanderers, for the land has been pretty well cleared by fires and loggers. I never saw but one of these birds alive before. It was in the beginning of last winter, near Dover, Del. There had been a "freeze" the night before and all the small puddles, and a good many of the big ones had a pretty thick coat of ice. While walking near a creek I heard something pounding on the ice, and then an angry "squeal" unmistakably a bird's. A

few steps brought him in sight. He was down on the ice covering a small inlet, pounding till I thought he would break his bill, and stopping every few seconds to squeal. I could not see what he wanted, unless it was water. After several minutes of this occupation he flew up and lit on a tree directly in front of me, and not over six feet away, and pounded it. Then with a series of cries he flew into the swamp and that was the last I saw of him, but his whole performance was extremely ludicrous.—*Chas. D. Gibson, Renovo, Pa.*

Bell's Vireo—(*Vireo belli*.)

This is the most abundant Vireo in Kansas, where, during the breeding season, its song may be heard from every copse and hedge. It arrives from the South, at this station, about the first week of May and is soon dispersed over the country, wherever there is shrubbery to supply its favorite insect food. Its song resembles that of the White-eyed Vireo, but seems to me to be more cheerful. It sings during the entire day; even on the warmest days, when other birds are silent. About the first week in June one may find nests containing the full complement of eggs. June 1st is my earliest date. The nest is but a few feet from the ground, attached to a horizontal branch, in true Vireo style. It is much more compact and more strongly built than that of any other Vireo with which I am acquainted. The materials of the nest are constant, being fibrous substances fastened together by the bird's saliva. In the lining only have I found variation. The usual lining is, like that of the other Vireos, composed of fine grasses; but in two nests the lining was of long horse-hair. I have never found any downy substances in the lining, as described by some writers. The osage orange, prickly ash, wild plum, and elm are favorite nesting places for this species, but I have found the nest on apple, peach, and willow trees, and even on the branch of a Jamestown weed. (*Datura*

stramonium.) The eggs, four in number, average 24×18 , in 32ds of an inch. They are white and usually spotted irregularly, with small red, brown, or almost black dots. Some entire sets are pure white, while frequently but one or two eggs have markings. On June 18, 1883, a few days after a severe storm, I found a Bell's Vireo nest upon the ground. It contained four young just hatched. Upon examination I found that the nest with eggs had been torn from its fastening on the branch of a shrub about eighteen inches from the ground. This had evidently been done by the storm while the bird was upon the nest. Instead of deserting her home, she had gathered fresh material and fastened the nest securely to the leaves of some weeds beside which it had lodged. So far as I have observed this Vireo always deserts her nest when the Cow-bird invades it with her parasitic eggs.—*D. E. Lantz, Manhattan, Kansas.*

Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Your advice about the red-headed Woodpeckers came too late. I had been watching a pair that had their nest finished for some time, and finally concluded that they must have completed the set, and so opened the hole to find it empty. A second nest I had my "eye" on was opened by small boys. I still have one left from which I hope to get a set. Mr. Worthington shot one of the birds which belonged to this nest, but I was there to-day and the other bird had secured a new mate and was very much worried when I was near the nest, so I think she has begun to lay. I shall not disturb her however for another week as this is my "third and last chance" for a set, and I want to be sure this time. Worthington has shot four of these birds this Spring which I think would have bred. I told him he ought not to shoot them, but he didn't think they were going to stay. We had good luck on Gardiner's Island and got a lot of

Fish Hawks' and Night Herons' eggs. I also found a Woodcock's nest containing one egg, just as we were going to leave. I left it in order to get the full set, and went down again on Wednesday, the 24th, and got the set of three. Incubation was just begun. This is very late for Woodcock's eggs and must have been a second set. We saw and heard several Great Carolina Wrens on the Island and Yellow-breasted Chats were very common. So far this season I have collected Downy Woodpecker 1-5, Mottled Owl 1-2, 1-4, 2-5; Fish Hawk 6-2, 2-3, 2-4; Green Heron 2-4; Night Heron 5-3, 12-4, 3-5; Woodcock 1-3; Kingfisher 4-7; also, a Chickadee's nest containing 8 eggs.—*Moses B. Griffing, Shelter Island, N. Y. May 26th, 1883.*

AGED EAGLE. A Bradenberg peasant not long ago found a large eagle eating the carcass of a dog. He shot the bird, which was black, with white shoulders. On its left foot was a gold ring, on which were cut the letters, still visible, "H. Ks. o. k." underneath which was the word "Eperjes," and on the other side the date "10, 9, 1827." Eperjes is a town in upper Hungary.

AGE OF OWLS. In answer to the following inquiry made of me by Dr. Grabham, of Pontefract, I could only say that I believe birds of the hawk tribe are considered to be long-lived, but that I would ask for more particular information through your column. It was only a week or two ago that I saw in one of the papers of an eagle having been shot somewhere on the Continent, which from a silver ring round its leg was shown to have been of a great age. [See item above.]

I have just lost by death a brown owl which has been in my possession twenty-one years and three months. I shall esteem it a great favor to learn from you if this is an unusual age for this bird. He was a splendid fellow, and much admired about here. My son has two very fine young birds to succeed him.

One and the same fate, *nullo discrimine*, befalls the eagle and the osprey. *Eheu!* *F. O. Morris, in Land and Water.*

NEW BIRD LABELS.—We have received from the publisher, L. S. Foster, New York, samples of a set of labels he has just issued which are quite different from anything of the kind which we have seen elsewhere, for by a very simple and ingenious method the exact position in classification which the specimen labeled holds can be told at a glance; not only the name of species, genus, family order and sub-class, to which it is referable, but also the rank of each of these divisions, their relations to others of the same group. There is likewise spaces left for the "Smithsonian number," and the Collector's "serial number," as well for for the "locality, date and collector." We should think that the labels will be warmly welcomed by those forming collections for purposes of elementary instruction, but we fear they are rather cumbersome to come into general use for collections where economy of space has to be considered. For specimen illustration see cover pages.

DEATH OF AN AGED OWL.—An aged owl, the pet of a house on Middle street, Portsmouth, passed away recently, and was buried at night with distinguished honors, slow music, and the recitation of appropriate lines from the "Burial of Sir John Moore." Above the grave of the pet bird which, by the way, was dubbed William, is the following inscription: "Sacred to the memory of William Owl, born Feb. 22, 1800; died Aug. 22, 1883." The owl came from Newbern, N. C., and, it is said, was actually 83 years old, having been handed down from family to family in Newbern, and his history being accurately preserved. *Norfolk Landmark.*

A HEARING OF BIRD'S EARS. We acknowledge with pleasure the receipt of a work with the above title from Dr. Elliott Coues of the Smithsonian Institute, which appeared in Science, running through numbers 34-38 and 39. The doctor is an industrious worker in the science to which he is devoted.

ALBINO QUAIL. I was fortunate enough to secure a fine specimen of this bird, which was shot twenty miles north of the city, Oct. 19th. The bird is pure white, with the exception of four light brown feathers (two on the head and one on each wing,) and is in good plumage. I have him mounted and feel quite elated over my success in adding such a rarity to my cabinet. A gentleman of this place shot an Albino Robin in the city, this Spring, that is pure cream color. I was unable to secure this specimen.—*Fletcher M. Noe, Indianapolis, Ind.*

"IRREGULARS" in birds egg for 1883: *Dendroica aestiva*, four set, one egg unspotted; set of four Yellow-shafted Flicker, all spotted with dull red; set of three Yellow-headed Blackbirds, one marbled, with no spots. Sept. 30 and Oct. 5, shot specimens of migrating birds, White-throated Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Black Snowbird, Fox-colored Sparrow and Purple Finch, the latter a male in imperfect plumage; the only one I have ever seen in this region.—*P. B. Peabody, Faribault, Minn.*

YELLOW-BREADED CHAT. June 29, 1883, noticed a pair of Yellow-breasted Chats feeding young about half-fledged, first I ever saw breeding in this locality; next day found another Chat's nest with four young.

A CHIMNEY SWIFT impaled on the point of a lightning rod, caused, no doubt, "by his headlong plunge down to his nest."

BLUEBIRDS. A pair of Bluebirds have raised three broods, their nest being placed behind the closed half of a pair of blinds affixed to the window of an occupied room in my house, the sitting bird being in full view; their confidence was not misplaced. *F. H. Carpenter, Rehoboth, Mass.*

BACK VOLUMES. Those who intend keeping a full file of the O. and O. should lose no time in ordering the back volumes. Volume VI, \$2.50; vols. VII and VIII, \$1.25 each. The three volumes bound in one \$5, free by mail.





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