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IN MEMORIAM: GLOVER MORRILL ALLEN

BY WINSOR MARRETT TYLER

Plate 4

GLOVER MORRILL ALLEN, A.M., Ph.D., Fellow of The American Ornithologists' Union and Editor of 'The Auk,' died suddenly in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on February 14, 1942. His death brought to the Science of Zoölogy a grave loss, and to his friends a sadness which grows more and more keen as we realize that only our memory of him remains.

As we think back over his life, we seem to see two pictures: one, the eminent naturalist, admired, respected and honored the world over; the other, our beloved personal friend, quiet, humble, almost self-effacing, the epitome of modesty. It may be that Glover himself saw the two pictures, too. When he became Editor of 'The Auk,' someone congratulated him on his appointment. He smiled—his delightful, gentle smile—and said: "It seems hard to believe."

Glover Allen was born in Walpole, New Hampshire, on February 8, 1879, the son of the Reverend Nathaniel Glover Allen and Harriet Ann (Schouler) Allen. He prepared for college at the Newton (Massachusetts) High School, and as we enumerate below the further steps in his education we realize that he must have been a youth of exceptional promise and ability, driven on by a deep interest in his chosen field, Natural History.

He graduated from Harvard College, *magna cum laude*, in 1901, being elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year. He received from the same University the degrees of A.M. in 1903 and Ph.D. in 1904, his doctor's thesis being "The Heredity of Coat Color in Mice." During his four years in college, in addition to taking courses in botany and zoölogy, he studied foreign languages, including even Russian and, in his spare time, Danish, acquiring thereby knowledge which was to be of inestimable value to him in later years. During 1906



Glover M. Allen

and 1907 he attended the Harvard Graduate School and served as Editor of 'The American Naturalist,' and in the latter year began to work on the mammal collections of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. Thus, ten years after leaving high school, he was well launched as a professional naturalist.

Glover Allen's interest turned early to the study of Natural History. Even as a schoolboy he familiarized himself with the birds and mammals about his home in Newton and his summer home at Intervale, New Hampshire, and while still in high school joined the American Ornithologists' Union as an Associate. Before graduating from college he published, with Reginald Heber Howe, Jr., 'The Birds of Massachusetts,' a volume characteristic of the careful work of his later years; in 1903, he published in The Proceedings of the Manchester (N. H.) Institute of Arts and Sciences, 'A List of the Birds of New Hampshire,' which won high praise in a review by J. A. Allen, Editor of 'The Auk' (Auk, 21: 503-505, 1904). Upon graduation from college he was appointed Secretary, Librarian and Editor of The Boston Society of Natural History. When he retired from the office of Secretary in 1924, he was appointed Lecturer in Zoölogy at Harvard and Curator of Mammals in The Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, a position he held during the remainder of his life. In 1927 he was elected President of the American Society of Mammalogists and served for two years.

He was married on June 26, 1911, to Sarah Moody Cushing, who, with a daughter, Elizabeth Cushing (Mrs. Arthur Gilman), survives him.

In the course of his busy life, no more than outlined above, Dr. Allen travelled widely, studying the animals in many countries and collecting material for research. In 1903, he took a long cruise with Owen Bryant and Thomas Barbour in the northern Bahamas; in 1906 he visited Labrador with Dr. Charles W. Townsend; in 1909 he went to East Africa with Dr. William Lord Smith and Gorham Brooks; in 1910, with Professor C. T. Brues, he visited the island of Grenada in the West Indies; in 1912, with Dr. John C. Phillips, he went again to Africa and with a caravan travelled through the eastern Sudan along the course of the Dinder River and the Blue Nile; in 1926 he went with Richard P. Strong, Dr. George Shattuck, Dr. Joseph Bequaert, and Harold Coolidge to West Africa, visiting Liberia and the Belgian Congo; in 1929 he was a member of an expedition to Brazil; and in 1931 he travelled to Australia in the company of William Morton Wheeler.

In spite of his small stature and seeming frailness, Dr. Allen withstood the hardships of travel with surprisingly little discomfort and fatigue, and his associates, men of widely different personalities, agree that he was a delightful travelling companion, enlivening the journeys with his humor and stimulating the work with his enthusiasm and knowledge. Apparently he was happy on his travels, facing trials and even danger with a fortitude which almost amounted to indifference. He had a fondness for deserts. To him a desert was not barren, empty and dreary, but a place full of life, beauty and peace which would make an ideal, lifelong home.

Many of Glover Allen's friends associate him with the Nuttall Ornithological Club. The older members recall him, years ago, when he was Secretary from 1901 to 1906 and again from 1908 to 1912. At that time William Brewster was President, and the Club held its meetings in his museum on Riedesel Avenue, Cambridge. Allen, then a slim young man, sat on the right hand of the presiding officer and, always quiet and reserved but ever alert, harmonized with the dignified, almost solemn, atmosphere with which Mr. Brewster suffused the meetings.

In 1919 William Brewster died, and Glover Allen was elected President. Charles F. Batchelder, in his 'An Account of the Nuttall Ornithological Club' (1937), speaking of this period of the Club's history, pays Allen this high compliment: "Mr. Brewster's death marked the end of an era in the Club's history. Fortunately, a feeling existed that if the Club turned its face persistently toward the highest scientific standards, if it could find a leader who inevitably would maintain them, the members could be counted on to respond with even an increased devotion to its welfare. Such a successor to Mr. Brewster was found, and the Club's faith was justified. It elected a new President, one willing to spend precious time and strength for its interests, able to draw on unfailling depths of tact and of knowledge for the betterment of its meetings, inspiring it always to sounder and clearer thinking. Nearly twenty years have shown that under his guidance the Club can go on with utter confidence to ever increasing strength and usefulness."

As presiding officer of the Nuttall Club, Allen maintained the dignity of his predecessor, but with no hint of austerity, and brought to the chair a wide range of knowledge on many branches of Natural History. Many of those who remember both of the Club's presidents cannot fail to have noticed that Allen, evidently with William Brewster in mind, often used the very words which Brewster had been ac-

customed to employ when conducting the meetings, and we cannot doubt that Allen was paying a conscious tribute to the man whose place he had taken. His remarks in introducing a guest to the Club were courteous, easy and complimentary, and at the end of a paper he always spoke the tactful words which started the discussion in the best direction. How many times we have heard some one say on these occasions: "Glover always says exactly the right thing." But it was more than this, more than a studied, apt remark; it was an expression of honest interest, and, from his profound extensive knowledge, he frequently brought out tactfully some point which the speaker had overlooked.

Allen was a capable observer in the field; patient, absorbed in his investigation, he had the faculty of becoming inconspicuous when out of doors by reason of his quiet motions and his power to stand immovable. Years ago, when he was working on the small mammals of New England, he used to spend the Sunday morning hours on the westerly slope of Arlington Heights, not far from the famous 'Wren Orchard' of Frank Bolles (Allen lived in Arlington at the time). Often Mr. Walter Faxon and I would see him there, sometimes in the distance, wandering quietly away among the trees, following up the chipmunks whose life cycle he was studying from week to week. Oftener, perhaps, he would join us, always becoming interested at once in *our* observations.

It was delightful to travel in Allen's company; you learned much from his seemingly idle conversation along the way, about birds, mammals, insects, and geology, and he often quoted short scraps from the classics or an apt line or two of verse, all intermixed with quiet humor. Yet in some subtle way he gave you the complimentary impression that he was deriving pleasure from *your* companionship. On a short trip to Cape Cod, years ago, we spent the night at a hotel in Plymouth. In the darkness of our bedroom at the end of the day, someone walked heavily across the room above ours. Allen, almost asleep, murmured: "The Wild Ass stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep."

Allen's memory was remarkable; his store of knowledge over a wide range of subjects seemed instantly available to him, often in the minutest detail. The habit which he followed for years of taking notes as he read doubtless aided his retentive memory.

Glover Allen's friend, Austin H. Clark, speaks thus of the extent of his knowledge of Zoölogy (Science, March 13, 1942): "Dr. Allen's interests were by no means confined to birds and mammals. He had

an extensive acquaintance with many other groups, particularly with their representatives in New England. This was not surprising in the case of other vertebrates, which are not numerous represented in New England, but to see him recognize certain rare insects in the field was surprising. Once in a bog at Essex he suddenly exclaimed, "There is *Bombus borealis*," and, sure enough, there was that rare little bumblebee flying about." Similarly, some years ago at Cohasset, where Allen joined a group of us to spend a day in the field, he arrived in the evening and immediately pointed out to us a rare foreign fly that was standing on the ceiling. And on the walk next morning he was the first to see a Mockingbird perched on the ridge-pole of a house.

On the resignation of Dr. Witmer Stone at the end of 1936, Glover Allen replaced him as Editor of "The Auk." With his familiarity with ornithological literature and his former experience as an editor, Dr. Allen was well fitted to fill this position. He brought also to the office an ability, rarely found in men placed in authority, yet of inestimable value in an editor or a reviewer, the ability to point out honestly and fearlessly defects in the work of other writers without wounding their feelings or arousing their antagonism. Many of Allen's reviews, masterpieces of tact and delicacy, show that he possessed this ability in marked degree.

Three works by Allen stand out pre-eminently, and assure him of lasting fame as a zoölogist. The following quotation from The Annual Report of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy for 1938-1939 has reference to these volumes. "On May 15th a noteworthy celebration was held by the Staff of the Museum in recognition of the fact that three important volumes had appeared from Dr. Allen's pen during the course of the year. These were 'Bats,' a complete treatise regarding these animals from a consideration of the folk lore concerning them to their palaeontological history, a 'Checklist of African Mammals,' and a ponderous tome giving the results of his study of the 'Mammals of China and Mongolia.'"

Allen was not a popular man in the superficial sense; he had none of the hearty camaraderie of the 'jolly good fellow.' In fact many men who had known him for years felt a bit of restraint in his presence. To quote one of them: "All of us who were friends of Glover Allen had a very high regard for him, but at the same time there was always a little air of reserve that even his intimates could not penetrate, and made us wonder how much we really knew him after all."

It is true, no doubt, that Allen did shrink from expressions of inti-

macy, not, however, because of coldness in his nature or of indifference toward his friends, but because of the overpowering modesty of his character. He had none of the small talk of everyday intercourse; he never talked about himself, doubtless because, himself so modest, he did not think that such talk would interest anyone. He was ever ready, however, to express his opinion when asked for it, but never forward in advancing one, or combating the opinions of others. He felt, nevertheless, deep devotion for many of his friends, notably, among the older men, for William Brewster and Walter Faxon, and when he met a man for whom he cared, his face shone, alight with brilliant welcome. Many of us can recall some favor he did for us or some pretty compliment he paid us, all unostentatiously, as if he were pleasing himself.

The friendship he offered was the kind that the world seldom gives, built on the broad principles of Christianity, free from selfish interest, of a depth unguessed and therefore sometimes misunderstood.

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SOME IRRELEVANT BEHAVIOR IN BIRDS¹

BY A. L. RAND

It has long been known that birds, when excited, sometimes behave in a manner which apparently has no bearing on the situation confronting the bird. A typical case is that of a bird flying up and singing when disturbed by an intruder near its nest. Huxley (Auk, 33: 142-161, 256-270, 1916) and Tinbergen (Amer. Midl. Nat., 21: 210-233, 1939) have brought together a number of examples of such behavior; the following are additional cases, illustrating its prevalence and some forms it may take.

One example is that of the incubating Pileated and Downy Woodpeckers (*Geophloeus pileatus* and *Dryobates pubescens*) which, at the approach of a human intruder, threw chips from the nest cavities that contained eggs (quoted in Bent, U. S. Nat. Mus., Bull. no. 174: 49, 191, 1939). On one occasion this made an egg collector think that the nest was incomplete. As he did not then examine the nest more closely, and as at a later visit he found young in the nest, these actions had saved the eggs. The egg collector then suggested that

¹A contribution from the Archbold Expeditions of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City.