

THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

On September 26, a convention of American ornithologists met in the library of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, to organize an AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, pursuant to the following call:—

CAMBRIDGE AND WASHINGTON,
AUGUST 1, 1883.

To _____

DEAR SIR:—

You are cordially invited to attend a Convention of *American Ornithologists*, to be held in New York City, beginning on September 26, 1883, for the purpose of founding an AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, upon a basis similar to that of the "British Ornithologists' Union." The place of meeting will be announced hereafter.

The object of the UNION will be the promotion of social and scientific intercourse between American ornithologists, and their co-operation in whatever may tend to the advancement of Ornithology in North America.

A special object, which it is expected will at once engage the attention of the UNION, will be the revision of the current lists of North American Birds, to the end of adopting a uniform system of classification and nomenclature, based on the views of a majority of the UNION, and carrying the authority of the UNION. Other important matters will be doubtless presented for consideration at the first meeting.

It is proposed to hold meetings at least once annually, at such times and places as may be hereafter determined, for the reading of papers, the discussion of such matters as may be brought before the UNION, and the transaction of the usual business of a scientific society.

Those who attend the first meeting will be considered *ipso facto* Founders of the AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION. Active and Corresponding Members may be elected in due course after organization of the UNION, under such rules as may be established for increase of membership. Details of organization will be considered at the first meeting.

Should you favor this proposition, and propose to attend the first meeting, please so signify to any one of the undersigned.

J. A. ALLEN, Cambridge, Mass.,
Editor of the Nuttall Bulletin.

ELLIOTT COUES, Washington, D. C.,
Assoc. Editor of the Nuttall Bulletin.

WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.,
President of the Nuttall Club.

This call was sent to a little less than fifty of the more prominent ornithologists of the United States and Canada, selected mainly in reference to their scientific standing, but somewhat with regard to geographical representation, it being desirable to make the gathering as catholic and non-sectional as possible. Of the forty-eight persons invited all but fourteen responded, in each case warmly favoring the project; there is reason to believe that in a large part of the remaining instances the persons invited failed, through absence from home or other cause, to receive the call. Twenty-five of those heard from expressed their intention to attend the convention, and twenty-one were actually present. Following is a list of those in attendance, with the states whence they came: Hon. Chas. Aldrich, Iowa; H. B. Bailey, E. P. Bicknell, D. G. Elliot, Dr. A. K. Fisher, Dr. J. B. Holder, Dr. E. A. Mearns, and Dr. C. H. Merriam, New York; C. F. Batchelder, W. Brewster, C. B. Cory, and H. A. Purdie, Massachusetts; Capt. C. E. Bendire, U. S. A., Oregon; N. C. Brown, Maine; M. Chamberlain, New Brunswick; Dr. E. Coues, Dr. D. W. Prentiss, and R. Ridgway, District of Columbia; T. McIlwraith, Canada; Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, U. S. A., Louisiana; Dr. J. M. Wheaton, Ohio.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Brewster, and Dr. Coues and Mr. Bicknell were respectively elected temporary Chairman and Secretary. The original call for the Convention was then read, and also the list of persons to whom invitations had been sent, twenty-one of whom were present and responded. On motion of Dr. Merriam a resolution was adopted to the effect: That those who attended the convention be declared Founders of the American Ornithologists' Union, and that this Union be declared to be hereby founded. A communication was then read by the Chair from Professor Baird, expressing his hearty concurrence in the objects of the Convention, and his regret at being unable to be present. The Chair then referred to the eminent standing as naturalists of both Prof. Baird and Mr. Allen, and urged, notwithstanding their enforced absence—the one by pressing official duties, the other by physical disability—that these gentlemen, in view of their connection with the initial steps of organization, be enrolled among the Founders, raising the number of Founders to twenty-three. A motion to this effect was unanimously carried.

A provisional draft of a constitution was presented by the Chair and read by the Secretary. On motion of Mr. Brewster, it was re-read, discussed, voted upon section by section, and finally adopted as a whole. Subsequently one of the articles was reconsidered and modified. As finally adopted, its leading provisions are as follows: Members are divided into four classes: (1) Active, limited to fifty in number, and to be residents of the United States or Canada. (2) Foreign, limited to twenty-five, and to be non-residents of the United States or Canada. (3) Corresponding, eligible from any country, and limited to one hundred. (4) Associate, to be unlimited in number, and residents of the United States or Canada. Eligibility to office and the right to vote are restricted to Active Members, whose annual dues are fixed at \$5.00. Foreign and Corresponding Members are enrolled upon signifying acceptance of membership. Members of all classes are entitled to present papers and take part in scientific discussions.

The officers of the Union consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and Treasurer (combined in one officer), and five Councillors, who together form a Council. These officers are to be elected annually at the stated meetings of the Union. Stated meetings are to be held each year at such times and places as the Union may determine. Special meetings may be called by the Council as occasion may require. There is also a provision authorizing the Council to issue publications.

Following the adoption of the constitution, an election was held for Active, Foreign, Corresponding and Associate Members, and for officers for the ensuing year. To the list of Active Members, represented by the Founders, were added: W. B. Barrows, G. B. Grinnell, and J. H. Sage, Connecticut; Prof. F. E. L. Beal, Iowa; L. Belding and Dr. J. G. Cooper, California; R. Deane, and Prof. S. A. Forbes, Illinois; Col. N. S. Goss, Kansas; Prof. T. N. Gill, H. W. Henshaw and Dr. J. H. Kidder, U. S. N., District of Columbia; J. A. Jeffries, Massachusetts; Prof. F. H. King, Wisconsin; Dr. F. W. Langdon, Ohio; G. N. Lawrence, and N. T. Lawrence, New York; Dr. J. C. Merrill, U. S. A., Montana; Dr. H. Nehrling, Missouri; E. W. Nelson, Colorado; T. S. Roberts, Minnesota; W. E. D. Scott, Arizona; Hon. G. B. Sennett, Pennsylvania, and W. E. Saunders, Canada. The number of Active Members was thereby raised to forty-seven.

The election for officers resulted as follows: President, J. A. Allen; Vice-Presidents, Dr. Elliott Coues and Robert Ridgway; Secretary and Treasurer, Dr. C. Hart Merriam; Councillors, Prof. S. F. Baird, G. N. Lawrence, William Brewster, H. W. Henshaw, and Montague Chamberlain.

The election of Foreign Members resulted in the choice of the following twenty-one scientists of eminence in Ornithology: Prof. J. V. Barboza du Bocage, Lisbon; Dr. Jean Cabanis, Berlin; Mr. Henry E. Dresser, London; Dr. Otto Finsch, Bremen; Dr. H. H. Giglioli, Florence; Dr. John Gundlach, Cuba; Mr. John Henry Gurney, Sr., Norwich, England; Dr. Gustav Hartlaub, Bremen; Mr. Allan O. Hume, Calcutta; Prof. Thomas Henry Huxley, London; Dr. Ferdinand Krauss, Stuttgart; Prof. Alphonse Milne-Edwards, Paris; Prof. Alfred Newton, Cambridge, England; Prof. William Kitchen Parker, London; August von Pelzeln, Vienna; Count Tommaso Salvadori, Turin; Mr. Osbert Salvin, London; Dr. Hermann Schlegel, Leyden; Dr. Philip Lutley Sclater, London; Mr. R. B. Sharpe, London; Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, London.

The following twenty Corresponding Members were elected, further elections in this class being deferred: Count Hans von Berlepsch, Hesse, Germany; Capt. Thomas Blakiston, Hakodadi, Japan; Mr. Walter Buller, Wellington, New Zealand; Mr. Robert Collett, Christiania, Norway; Mr. J. J. Dalgleish, Edinburgh; M. le Père Armand David, Paris; Mr. Percy Evans Freke, Dundrum, Ireland; Mr. F. DuCane Godman, London; M. Alfred Grandidier, Paris; Mr. John Henry Gurney, Jr., Norwich, England; Mr. J. Edmund Harting, London; Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown, Larbert, Scotland; Mr. J. Douglas Ogilby, Ireland; M. Emile Oustalet, Paris; Prof. J. A. Palmèn; Mr. Harry Pryer, Yokohama, Japan; Mr. Howard Saunders, London; Mr. Henry Seebohm, London; Mr. Leonhard Stejneger, Alaska; Mr. Henry T. Wharton, London.

Eighty-seven ornithologists of the United States and Canada were elected Associate Members.

During the session of the Convention, aside from the work of organization and elections, committees were appointed by the Chair to take in hand the consideration of various important subjects, and to present reports upon them at the next annual meeting. The most important of these—"A Revision of the Classification

and Nomenclature of North American Birds"—was referred to a committee of five, consisting of Messrs. Coues, Allen, Ridgway, Brewster, and Henshaw. A committee was also appointed on the "Migration of Birds," to coöperate with Mr. W. W. Cooke in connection with his work on this subject in the Mississippi Valley, and consists of the following gentlemen, with power to add to their number: Merriam, Brown, Purdie, Wheaton, Chamberlain, Grinnell, Henshaw, Cory, Merrill, Fisher, Bicknell, Mearns, and McIlwraith. A committee on "Avian Anatomy" consists of Shufeldt, Coues, Jeffries, and Merriam; another on "Oölogy," of Bendire, Bailey, Brewster, Ridgway, and Merrill. A committee was also appointed "to investigate the eligibility or ineligibility of the European House Sparrow in America," consisting of Holder, Purdie, Chamberlain, Brown, and Bicknell, with power to increase its membership at its discretion. Finally, a sixth committee was appointed to consider the subject of "Faunal Areas," on which were placed Allen, Ridgway, Bicknell, Merriam, Fisher, and Mearns.

Resolutions of thanks were tendered to the Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, for use of rooms during the session of the Union and for other favors so courteously rendered; to Prof. A. S. Bickmore and Dr. J. B. Holder for many kind attentions personally rendered to the members; and to Mr. E. P. Bicknell for his services on the "Committee of Arrangements" for the meeting, and for the promptness and thoroughness with which he executed the duties of this position. A resolution of thanks was also tendered the signers of the call, in their capacity as a "Committee of Organization," for their zeal and efficiency in issuing the call for the meeting, as well as for the thorough and systematic preparation they were able to make for the speedy and satisfactory transaction of the business incident to the organization of the Union.

The session of the Convention occupied three days, and was marked throughout with the utmost harmony; at adjournment (subject to the call of the Council), hearty expressions of satisfaction with the results of the session were heard from all who had shared in its deliberations. The general good feeling rose to a degree of enthusiasm auguring well for the future work and prosperity of the Union, the organization of which, under such auspicious circumstances, cannot fail to mark an important era in the progress of ornithology in America.

As already stated, the matter of publications was placed in the hands of the Council, by which body the subject was duly weighed after the adjournment of the Union. Naturally the question of an organ, in the form of a serial publication, was the first to present itself, and the impression was general that such a publication must prove indispensable to the work of the Union. It was accordingly voted to establish such a journal, its publication to begin January, 1884. Mr. Allen was chosen editor, to be assisted by a staff of associate-editors, likewise selected by the Council, who are collectively to decide the character of the periodical, and to whom will be intrusted its management.

It may be further announced in the present connection that upon this action being known, it became a question with the members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club whether the Nuttall Club should continue to publish an organ, which, under the new conditions, could only be a rival of that of the Union. The two organizations being virtually one in interest and purpose,—the later being to some extent an outgrowth of the earlier,—and necessarily identical in membership in so far as can be the case where a greater includes a lesser, the Nuttall Club, at a meeting held October 1, voted to discontinue its *Bulletin* with the close of the present volume, and to offer to the American Ornithologists' Union its good will and subscription list,—to place the *Bulletin* in the hands of the Council of the Union with its traditions and prestige, with the tacit understanding that the new serial of the Union shall be ostensibly a *second series* of the Nuttall *Bulletin*. It is therefore to be hoped and expected that the many friends of the *Bulletin* who have hitherto given it such hearty support will extend their allegiance to the new publication of the Union, freely contribute their observations to its pages, and use their influence to extend its usefulness.