

The remarks were made as brief as possible in order that it should not be considered as a preliminary report upon my own investigations. I made no reference in the List to my present work of preparing a report upon the natural history of the region included under the heading of that List; and, so far as the published List is concerned, it has no connection with the report now well under way. A plan, other than following the recognized natural order of listing the birds, was not necessary for the purpose of that List.

In regard to the omission of certain species, you mention two, but there is no record of the indubitable occurrence of *Larus canus* within the region defined. The young specimen, in first plumage, of *Larus canus*, upon which is based the statement of the occurrence of this species in Labrador, is in the U. S. National Museum. The identification, however, is regarded by competent authorities as so extremely doubtful that it was deemed judicious to exclude it altogether.

I regarded the alleged discovery of the Pacific Eider, by Stearns, in Labrador as so extremely improbable that reference to it was not considered necessary. The reference made by Dr. L. Stejneger, in the October number of 'The Auk' for 1885 (p. 385) has no connection whatsoever with Labrador, Newfoundland not being a portion of the territory embraced under the heading of my List.

I purposely stated that the extracts were given in the List without comment or responsibility for their assertions, as a discussion of them was not deemed to be properly within the scope of the List, however tempting it may have been.

In regard to the several species accredited to Labrador by Audubon, I considered it well to include them; and now express the desire that some competent ornithologist, like Professor J. A. Allen, of the American Museum of Natural History of New York, who is specially fitted for the task, investigate each presumably doubtful species and reject such as may be considered as not entitled to a place in a list of the birds of that region.

LUCIEN M. TURNER.

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

October 28, 1885.

[We are very glad to learn that Mr. Turner's 'List' was not intended as a final report upon his ornithological work in Labrador, and regret that we fell into the error of so misconstruing it. As, however, it was based largely upon his own observations, and as no hint was given that any other report was contemplated, our conclusion was not only a natural one, but one we find to have been quite generally entertained.—J. A. A.)

Revival of the Sexual Passion in Birds in Autumn.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Sirs: On the morning of the 12th inst. I noticed a pair of Bluebirds toying with each other affectionately, and once certainly—twice as I thought—they were in the attitude, if not in the act, of copulation. The

question occurred to me at the moment, and I should like to propose it to the readers of 'The Auk,' whether birds may not be subject to a revival of the sexual passion in autumn, and whether this may not be connected with the well-known fact that many species have a second period of song after a longer or a shorter interval of silence. Is anything known on this point?

BRADFORD TORREY.

Boston, October 13, 1885.

NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. JOHN BURROUGHS has achieved a reputation as a popular, though not over-correct, writer on a variety of natural history topics, and is the author of many delightful essays about birds, and has even come to be looked upon as somewhat of an ornithologist, not only by the general public, but by ornithologists themselves. But his recent effusion on 'Bird Enemies,' in the 'Century' for December, 1885 (pp. 274-278), is for him at least an unfortunate production, being surprisingly weak on the score of intelligence, to say nothing of good taste. It is grossly erroneous in statement, slanderous in spirit, and betrays a degree of ignorance and a narrowness of vision on the part of this well-known writer, which would be quite beyond belief were not his name appended to the article. In speaking of the *natural* enemies of birds he is either not up to his usual standard, or we have heretofore ranked his proficiency in matters of this sort quite too highly. But when he classes ornithologists "as among the worst enemies" the birds have, and closes his article by saying, "but the professional nest-robber and skin-collector [his pet epithets, as the context shows, for ornithologists] should be put down, either by legislation or with dogs and shotguns," he betrays the usual intolerance begotten of ignorance. No further proof of his lack of appreciation of the requirements of science is required than his dictum that a student of ornithology "needs but one bird and one egg of a kind." Comment on such a statement in these pages would be superfluous, but unfortunately the general public is as ignorant as this 'blind leader of the blind.'

Can it be that our friend is so entirely unconscious of the wholesale slaughter of birds for millinery purposes as his complete silence on this subject would seem to indicate?—a slaughter which runs into the millions annually, compared with which the total destruction of birds for scientific, or *quasi*-scientific, purposes is as 'but a drop in the bucket.' Can it be, too, that his acquaintance with genuine ornithologists is so slight that he does not know that they, as a class, are among the best friends the birds have; that they never destroy wantonly or needlessly, and often regret the necessity of taking the lives of birds in behalf of scientific progress; that they deplore and frown upon much of the egg-collecting done in the