

graph, I by no means wish it to be understood that I in any way under-rate the significance of the 'notching' of the xiphoidal end of the sternum, in the *vast majority* of the class Aves.

One is both surprised and refreshed at the information conveyed in the last foot-note of Mr. Lucas's paper (p. 451);—surprised from the fact that the osteologist-in-chief of our great Government Museum at Washington should be, up to the time of his writing the article he contributed to 'The Auk,' ignorant of the opinions Dr. Parker has so ably presented us with in his matchless "treatise on the Skull of *Ægithognathous Birds*"; and refreshed to think that that institution can lay claim to a mind among its admirable staff of workers, in which it is evidently possible for opinions to evolve, *de novo*, which compare so favorably with those held by living masters in morphology.

Very respectfully,

R. W. SHUFELDT.

Fort Wingate, N. Mex., 16th November, 1886.

NOTES AND NEWS.

AT the recent meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Washington, during the discussion of the subject of bird protection, Mr. F. S. Webster spoke of the attitude of the members of the Union toward taxidermists, which seemed, he thought, one of enmity rather than of friendship. Mr. Brewster, in replying, said he was glad the matter had been brought up, as it was evident that there was a serious misapprehension of this subject on the part of taxidermists. He stated that honest taxidermists as a class were respected by ornithologists, who looked upon them as efficient and indispensable allies, and that the prevalent impression to the contrary was the outgrowth of malicious remarks by certain enemies of the Union. Mr. Brewster believed in encouraging true taxidermy, and in granting collecting permits to all honest taxidermists. What ornithologists wished to prevent was the wholesale traffic in birds for commercial purposes by men who had no claim to be ranked as taxidermists, though they so styled themselves. It was only the abuse of the privilege of collecting that ornithologists were striving to prevent.

Mr. Webster replied that the reason taxidermists felt aggrieved was the wording of the law proposed by the A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection, which was such as to practically prohibit even legitimate taxidermy. He would be glad to see the Union take a stand in the matter that would remove the existing feeling of antagonism between ornithologists and taxidermists.

The President being then called upon to express his views on the matter in question, stated that the proposed law was not intended to cripple

legitimate taxidermy, but mainly and primarily to prevent destruction of birds for millinery purposes. Conscientious, honest taxidermists, would have no difficulty in obtaining permits to collect birds for scientific or other legitimate purposes under the proposed law. It was certainly not the intention of the committee to in any way impede or prohibit the legitimate work of the taxidermist. He spoke in high praise of their services to ornithology. He was sure no feeling of antagonism on the part of the Union toward taxidermists as a class existed, but only against certain obnoxious persons, who had rendered themselves so by their wholesale slaughter of birds for gain, and who were not taxidermists in any true sense. He had found taxidermists, as a rule, to have too much of the spirit of the naturalist to be willing to become caterers to the milliner.

At the meeting of the Ridgway Ornithological Club held August 12, 1886, the following papers were read: 'Spring Notes from Cook and Lake Counties, Ill., and Lake Co., Ind.,' by Geo. L. Toppan; 'The Future of American Ornithology,' by R. W. Shufeldt. A number of donations of bird skins, and eggs, and of ornithological literature, from Resident and Corresponding members were announced. At the meeting held September 9, 1886, Mr. J. G. Parker, Jr., read a paper on the 'Ornithology of Sauk and Columbia Counties, Wis.,' which he illustrated with skins of the rarer species observed. At the meeting of October 14, 1886, Mr. H. K. Coale read a paper by Mr. Robert Ridgway entitled, 'List of the Birds found breeding within the corporate limits of Mount Carmel, Ill.' The subject of publishing the proceedings of the Club was discussed and favorably considered, and will be definitely decided at the next meeting.

At a meeting of the California Academy of Sciences, held November 1, 1886, a paper was read by Mr. Walter Bryant on the 'Ornithology of Guadalupe Island,' embodying the results of Mr. Bryant's ornithological work during several months spent at this interesting locality. The paper will soon be published in the Society's 'Bulletin.'

THE A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection published its second 'Bulletin' on November 11, 1886, in 'Forest and Stream.' It was immediately issued separately as an eight-page pamphlet, uniform in size and style with its 'Bulletin No. 1.' The present 'Bulletin' is devoted to 'Bird Protection by Legislation,' and is especially intended for distribution among the legislators of the different States, in the interest of securing better and more nearly uniform legislation for the protection of birds. It contains the recently enacted New York State law on this subject—essentially the same as the law drafted by the A. O. U. Committee and published in its first 'Bulletin'—with extended explanatory comment respecting the intent and scope of its leading provisions, some of which, owing to obscure phrasology, had been fallaciously interpreted. This is followed by a new draft by the Committee, amending in a few particulars their former one, with which, however, it agrees in all essential features. The age qualification of the former draft, and of the New York law, in refer-

ence to applicants for collecting permits is omitted, the other restrictions being deemed sufficient to prevent the granting of permits to persons not properly entitled to receive them. The penalties for the infringement of the law are increased, and one-half of the fines imposed for infringement of the act are awarded to the informant or prosecutor. Accompanying the draft are suggestions in relation to the manner of securing the enforcement of such laws. The 'Bulletin' also contains an abstract of the report of the Committee to the American Ornithologists' Union, some account of the work of the Audubon Society, and other matter relating to the general subject of the Committee's work.

The Committee having been continued by vote of the Union, and its report for last year accepted with thanks, its work will be carried on with vigor through the coming year, to facilitate which the Committee will probably increase its membership.

MR. M. ABBOTT FRAZAR is on his way to Lower California where he will spend an indefinite period collecting birds and eggs of the region for Mr. William Brewster. It is Mr. Brewster's intention to have the entire peninsula, with its neighboring islands, thoroughly explored by Mr. Frazar.

MR. HERBERT H. SMITH has recently returned from Brazil with large collections of natural history specimens, accumulated during five and a half years devoted to collecting in the interior of Brazil. Although Mr. Smith gave his attention especially to insects, of which he brought home some 400,000 specimens, he made collections of much importance in other departments of natural history. His collection of birds, numbering about 450 species and 7000 specimens, was made chiefly in the Province of Matto Grosso, on the headwaters of the Paraguay River, a region hitherto little explored. It is doubtless the largest collection ever brought by one person from so limited an area in South America; and besides throwing much light on the ornithology of this particular district, it must contain some novelties. Mr. Smith's collections are now at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, where, it is to be hoped, a large part of them will permanently remain. The birds have been placed in the hands of Mr. J. A. Allen for study and determination, who will in due time publish an annotated list of the species.

MR. WILLIAM BREWSTER is about to build a small private museum on his place at Cambridge. It will be of brick and thoroughly fire-proof. It will be arranged to accommodate a large collection of bird skins, nests and eggs, with limited case room, also, for mounted specimens.

MR. CHARLES H. TOWNSEND has just sailed for Yucatan and, under the auspices of the U. S. Fish Commission, will spend several months in natural history work in that country and some of its neighboring islands, devoting a considerable portion of his time to ornithology.