

Indeed, that cretaceous formation, it would seem to me, would afford the very best conditions for the preservation of such objects.

Captain Bendire has shown me a very beautiful specimen of a fossil egg of a turtle (*Emys*) that he personally collected. It is from the Cretaceous, and the fossilized remains of the turtle were found with it. He also showed me a fine fossil bird's egg, probably a *Sula*, found 42 ft. below the surface of a guano deposit on the Island of Lobos de Tierra, coast of Peru, and which has been estimated by the Peruvian scientists to be a thousand years old.

I reiterate my belief here that it is very likely that the eggs of all the early ancestral types of birds were plain white and without markings of any kind. When I say this I do not mean to include of course the more immediate ancestral types of modern birds, though it is probable that many of them laid pure white eggs, but rather those avian or reptilo-avian forms belonging to still earlier geologic periods, as for example such a horizon as the one in which *Hesperornis* and its contemporaries are found, or perhaps even still a little later, as those of the early part of the Tertiary age.

Very respectfully,

R. W. SHUFELDT.

Takoma, D. C.,
25 July, 1894.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE TWELFTH CONGRESS of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, beginning Monday, Nov. 12, 1894, with the meeting of the Council and the business meeting for the election of officers and members and the transaction of the usual routine business. Tuesday and following days will be given to public sessions for the reading and discussion of scientific papers. Members intending to present papers are requested to forward the titles of their papers to the Secretary, Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn., prior to Nov. 7, in order to facilitate the preparation of the program of papers to be read before the Congress.

MR. SAMUEL N. RHOADS of Haddonfield, New Jersey, has just published his 'Reprint of the North American Zoölogy, by George Ord,' announced some months since (see *Auk*, XI, p. 190) as in preparation. It forms an octavo volume of nearly 200 pages, relating about equally to mammals and birds. The work comes too late for formal review in the present number of 'The Auk.'

MR. GEORGE K. CHERRIE, for the last six years connected with the Museo Nacional at San José, Costa Rica, has recently resigned from the service of the Costa Rican government and returned to the United States. Almost immediately upon his arrival in New York he was offered and accepted the position of assistant in the Department of Ornithology at the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago, of which Mr. C. B. Cory has recently been made Curator (see Auk, XI, p. 264).

Mr. Cherrie has made an enviable record for himself in Costa Rica, displaying an energy and a capacity for work rarely equalled. He entered the employ of the Costa Rica government as its taxidermist. Soon, however, the authorities of the Museum, recognizing his industry and abilities, placed him in sole charge of the department of zoölogy. His interest in ornithology led him into the field as a collector and explorer, with the result of bringing together a collection of some 12,000 bird skins, besides many nests and eggs and several hundred specimens of mammals. His explorations covered nearly the whole of the Costa Rican Republic, but the region immediately about San José, the Volcano of Irazú, and the southwest coast region were the areas receiving special attention. These explorations added between fifty and sixty species to the list of Costa Rican birds, about twenty of which were new to science. He has published some of the results of his ornithological work in various preliminary papers (see Auk, Vols. VII-X, and Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vols. XIV-XVI), and various new species of mammals have been described from his material. Recent political changes in the country rendered the further prosecution of his work temporarily impracticable, but he has by no means given up hope of again resuming it at some more favorable time, and of publishing in detail the important facts he has gathered regarding the geographical distribution of the birds of Costa Rica, and the several well-marked life-areas into which the Republic is separable.

DR. EDGAR A. MEARNS, U. S. A., was detailed nearly three years since to accompany, as surgeon and naturalist, the International Boundary Commission appointed to relocate and mark the boundary line between Mexico and the United States. The Commission started from El Paso, Texas, in March, 1892, and reached the Pacific Coast early in July, 1894. Dr. Mearns has thus had somewhat over two years in the field, traversing a line nearly one thousand miles in extent, across portions of country so arid that it was necessary to transport water for long distances for the use of the expedition. Opportunity was thus afforded for collecting at points ordinarily inaccessible to naturalists, and from which specimens will not often be obtainable in the future. With the aid of one regular assistant and more or less casual help from other sources, Dr. Mearns has brought together immense collections in various departments of natural history, but particularly in mammalogy, ornithology, ethnology and botany. It is therefore very gratifying to learn that he has been assigned to duty at Fort Myers, in the immediate vicinity of Washington, and hence within easy access to the libraries and collections of the U. S. National Museum

and Smithsonian Institution. This will give him all needed facilities for working up his large collections, which will doubtless be made the basis of elaborate reports upon the natural history of the region traversed by the Boundary Commission.

ON JULY 7, 1894, the steamship 'Miranda' sailed from New York for Greenland, having on board a large party of scientists and pleasure seekers, under the leadership of Dr. F. A. Cook, surgeon and ethnologist of the first Peary Expedition. It was the intention to visit Newfoundland and the Labrador coast and then proceed, if possible, as far northward as the Peary headquarters at McCormick Bay.

But a series of mishaps befel the vessel, ending in her loss by striking a rock off West Greenland. The excursionists, as well as the ship's crew, were safely transferred to the fishing schooner 'Rigel,' and after many discomforts safely reached New York. But everything in the way of outfit and supplies, together with large collections in various departments of natural history, and about 1000 photographs, went down with the ill-fated steamer. Among the naturalists of the party were L. L. Dyche, Professor of Zoölogy in the University of Kansas; E. A. McIlhenny of Louisiana, and H. Travis of the American Museum of Natural History. Special attention had been given by them to birds and mammals, their combined collections numbering nearly 1000 specimens, forming one of the most important single collections ever made in Greenland. A special feature of the collection was a large series of the young, in various stages of growth, of the various species of both land and water birds met with. Had the expedition not been thus brought to an untimely close, the results would have been of great importance for ornithology. Although the naturalists of the party saved their note-books, the loss of the specimens is greatly to be deplored.

IT GIVES us pleasure to announce that Mr. D. G. Elliot, the well-known ornithologist and mammalogist, has been added to the scientific staff of the Field Columbian Museum of Chicago, he having recently been appointed Director of the Department of Zoölogy, and will soon enter upon the duties of his office.

MR. C. A. BABCOCK, Superintendent of Schools at Oil City, Penn., "has recently established a 'Bird Day' in the schools under his supervision. The literary exercises of the occasion are similar to those that have characterized the observance of 'Arbor Day' for the last decade, the object being the preservation of American birds from the women who wear them and from the small boy." From Mr. Babcock himself we learn that the pupils of his schools study birds throughout the year, making original observations which become the subjects of compositions or of 'talks' in the schools. Bird Day is merely the occasion for gathering together the work of the year, with the addition of such statements from books as can be made in the allotted time. "The peculiarity of our Nature Study," he adds, "is that it consists of actual observation by the

pupil, and not in learning from books." Well would it be if the example here set could be followed generally by the schools throughout the country. Aside from the advantage to the pupil of the knowledge gained, no better bird protection could be devised.

THE fashion journals just at the present time are not altogether pleasant reading to bird lovers or to persons of refined or humane instincts; for it is too evident that the absurd craze for hat decorations composed of bird skins, either entire or in endless degrees of mutilation and disfigurement, is again rampant. Thus a no less respectable fashion journal than 'Harper's Bazar,' in its issue of Aug. 18 last, in an article devoted to 'New Hats and Bonnets,' gives the following delectable information to its readers, without a word of protest or lament, under the subheading 'Birds and Wings.' ". . . Blackbirds prevail, and are poised in pairs, with beaks meeting lovingly, their wings and tails pointing straight to give the shape of a large bow, and often resting on a still larger bow of Liberty satin ribbon of many loops. This happy arrangement is on the front of small bonnets, while large hats have a second pair [of birds] across the back, resting on loops or *choux* of ribbon below the upturned brim. Single birds perch on the front edge of the brim of round hats, or nestle in the large *ruche* that surrounds the crown—the nestling or brooding bird is not considered so effective as the newly lighted bird with wings still in the air. The dear little blackbirds have been touched with color by French milliners, who hesitate at nothing. They are given throat or breast of bluet blue, aubergine, or emerald green, and their raven wings are also covered on one side with these colors. Small bluebirds and others of pale yellow or pink are *givr * with jet along their slender wings and pointed beaks. Large *choux* made of feathers or stiff quills *poudr * with jet are effective trimmings!"

Other fashion journals not only give similar instructions to their patrons, but illustrate these wonderful effects with appropriate figures.

On the other hand, it is refreshing to find evidence in 'The Fashions' column of some of our metropolitan newspapers that not all women are devoid of sense and feeling in millinery matters. Thus in the New York 'Evening Post' of recent date we find the following: "The fact is to be regretfully recorded that there is to be a rage for bird garnitures in millinery. Birds in groups or singly, and often their heads, wings, and breasts separately, form a decided feature of the season's very gay millinery. . . . Blackbirds, canaries, seagulls, swallows, and birds grotesquely dyed in various brilliant hues are seen on bonnets which look smaller than the decoration, so large are some of the victims to the brutal and perverted taste."

Evidently there is still hard work ahead for the A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection, for the Audubon Societies, and for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Societies, to meet this renewed attack upon bird life in the interest of the milliners' demand for 'bird garniture.' But more still can be done by the sensible women of the country individually, by not only refusing to wear such badges of barbarism, but by decrying the fashion as brutal and vulgar.