

Notes on the California Vulture.—It may interest members of the American Ornithologists' Union to learn that the California Vulture (*Pseudogryphus californianus*) is not likely to become extinct yet, as I recently saw a large flock of these rare birds. The circumstances were as follows: Oct. 10, 1894, while driving from Havilah southward, just as I was coming down into Walkers Basin, in the extreme southern end of the Sierra Nevada, I saw a California Vulture flying high in the air. As it was the first I had seen since March I got out my field glass and watched it. It appeared to settle toward the ground. A few minutes later another appeared and I saw it alight. As the road passed near where it alighted I kept on to opposite that point and getting out the glass again saw quite a number of Vultures about a carcass. A number of Ravens had flown away, but I could see no Turkey Vultures among those remaining. The bare necks of several appeared plain yellow at that distance.

They were about half a mile away. The ground was level and bare. The only cover was a wire fence, so it was nearly a hopeless case to attempt to stalk them, but the wind was blowing hard from the south and it seemed possible to walk up from the leeward and circle near enough for a shot, and so I camped and tried it. Before I got half way they began to rise and the last one left by the time I got within 300 yards. As I expected, the strong wind made them swing nearer me, but probably none came nearer than 150 yards. I expended two charges of buckshot in the futile hope that a stray buckshot might strike one.

As they rose singly or two or three together I had a good opportunity to count them. They were twenty-six in number! It was a sight I never before witnessed and do not expect to see again. Just think of it! Twenty-six California Vultures circling around above me, all in sight at once, as if they were but so many Turkey Vultures, and we had supposed the species was nearly extinct. Possibly it was a grand meeting of all the survivors, a family reunion; at any rate I had seen none for months and have seen none since.

I noticed but one immature bird. It rose last and perhaps others were in the thickest of the flock. I singled out two of the largest to fire at. They were not much larger than the average and there was no giant in the flock. Probably nine feet and six inches would be the spread of wings of the largest.

On walking up to the carcass I found it to be that of a young horse, not much eaten yet. In the hope that some of the birds might return I determined to wait until night in the vicinity (it was then 11 A.M.). Seeing the hopelessness of attempting to stalk them I tried another way to get them, and getting out half a dozen steel traps, set them around the carcass. It was an unfair method but I think few ornithologists would have hesitated on that account. It was useless, as no Vulture came in sight, although I waited until the approach of night necessitated driving on to some place where I could find water and feed for my horses, which

might be distant, as I did not know the country, this being my first trip through it.

The extreme drouth of the past season is destroying great numbers of cattle and horses in many parts of California and food for Vultures is therefore abundant. Bitter experience has increased the natural wariness of the species and now it is by a fortunate accident if the collector obtains a specimen. Unless an epidemic or some other disaster overtakes the species its extermination will not occur in our day.—F. STEPHENS, *Witch Creek, San Diego Co., Cal.*

Clark's Nutcracker in Eastern Missouri.—On the 15th of November last (1894) I had occasion to drop into the establishment of a prominent taxidermist, who handed me a bird to identify which proved a fine adult specimen of *Picicorvus columbianus*, Clark's Nutcracker, an extreme western species, never known to have been seen in this locality before. The specimen in question had been killed about four miles east of this city (Kansas City, Mo.) by a party while hunting in what is known as Big Blue bottom, formerly a heavily timbered district, though considerably thinned out now. The taxidermist was not positive as to the date of capture, but thought it was Oct. 28, or thereabout. He asked the gentleman who brought the specimen to him if any others like it were observed and he stated none others had been seen. Unfortunately he did not take the gentleman's name and address, so I had no opportunity of interviewing him personally. Prof. Dixon, the taxidermist, says he will mount this specimen, and probably send it to the State University at Columbia, Mo.

There was also brought into this same establishment a splendid specimen of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctala acadica*), killed by flying against a plate glass window on Broadway Avenue, this city, and picked up by a passer-by and brought in to be mounted. This is the second specimen of this diminutive species of the Owl family which had come into his hands from this immediate locality.—JOHN A. BRYANT, *1221 Olive St., Kansas City, Mo.*

Chats reared by Song Sparrows.—On June 8, 1894, while collecting about three miles north of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co., N. Y., I found a nest of the Chat (*Icteria virens*) containing a set of four eggs. They were packed away with some others I had collected and taken home, but on attempting to blow one I found that they were heavily incubated, the embryo being so large that it would have been impossible to remove it. In a small hedge near the house at which I was staying was a nest of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza fasciata*) containing a set of four very pretty eggs, but I did not like to rob the bird, as it was quite tame, and I had watched the building of the nest with a good deal of interest; so I thought of a scheme by which I could obtain the set and still give Melos-