

Now the question that I should like to have jointly considered by ornithologists and meteorologists, is whether there is a correlated variation in the flight of soaring birds and in the activity of local convectional movements, or other vertical movements. Do soaring birds float for a longer time without flapping wings in weather when convectional ascending currents are indicated, or in localities where disorderly ascensional currents, prompted by irregularity in the land surface, may be expected? A pair of observers, one attending to the behavior of birds, the other following out the processes of the winds, might perhaps discover some interesting correlations in this field of study. The work might be commended to semi-invalids, who are sent South in search of mild weather and gentle occupation. Could anything be more genially lazy than lying on one's back in the sun, and counting the turns of a Turkey Buzzard?

Very truly yours,

W. M. DAVIS,
Cambridge, Mass.

November 3, 1895.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY, an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died June 29, 1895, at his home in Eastbourne, England, in the 71st year of his age, having been born at Ealing, Middlesex, England, May 4, 1825. His early education was obtained partly at home and in part "at the semi-public school at Ealing, of which his father was one of the masters." In 1842, he entered the medical school of Charing Cross Hospital, and in 1845 passed the first M. B. examination at the University of London. The following year he joined the medical service of the Royal Navy, and was soon after assigned to the post of assistant surgeon to H. M. S. 'Rattlesnake,' which sailed from England late in the year 1846 for a surveying cruise in the Southern Seas, and thence around the world, returning to England in 1850. In recognition of his scientific work during this voyage, he was elected in June, 1851, a fellow of the Royal Society. He left the naval service in 1853, and in 1854 was appointed naturalist to the Geological Survey, and also made professor of natural history in the Government School of Mines, which latter position he occupied till 1885. From 1863 to 1869 he was Hunterian professor at the Royal College of Surgeons. He was president of the Geological Society of London in 1869 and 1870, president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1870, and of the Royal

Society in 1883. Between 1870 and 1885, when impaired health compelled his retirement, he filled numerous government positions, including, from 1881 to 1885, that of Inspector of Salmon Fisheries.

To quote from Professor Haeckel's memorable notice of Professor Huxley's work, published in 1874 (*Nature*, IX, Feb. 5, 1874, pp. 257, 258): "Indeed if at the present we run over the names distinguished in the several sciences into which Natural Knowledge may be divided — in Physics, in Chemistry, in Botany, in Zoology—we find but few investigators who can be said to have mastered the whole range of any one of them. Among the few we must place Thomas Henry Huxley, the distinguished British investigator, who at the present time justly ranks as the first zoologist among his countrymen. When we say the first zoologist, we give the widest and fullest signification to the word 'zoology' which the latest developments of this science demand. Zoology is, in this sense, the entire biology of animals; and we accordingly consider as essential parts of it the whole field of Animal Morphology and Physiology, including not only Comparative Anatomy and Embryology, but also Systematic Zoology, Palæontology and Zoological Philosophy. We look upon it as a special merit in Prof. Huxley that he has a thoroughly broad conception of the science in which he labors, and that, with a most careful and empirical acquaintance with individual phenomena, he combines a clear philosophical appreciation of general relations.

"When we consider the long series of distinguished memoirs with which, during the last quarter of a century, Prof. Huxley has enriched zoological literature, we find that in each of the larger divisions of the animal kingdom we are indebted to him for important discoveries. From the lowest animals, he has gradually extended his investigations up to the highest, and even to man. His earlier labors were, for the most part, occupied with the lower marine animals, especially with the pelagic organisms swimming at the surface of the open sea. . . . But it is the comparative anatomy and classification of the Vertebrata which, during the last ten years, he has especially studied and advanced. . . . After Charles Darwin had, in 1859, reconstructed this most important biological theory, and by his epoch-making theory of Natural Selection placed it on an entirely new foundation, Huxley was the first who extended it to man, and in 1863, in his celebrated three Lectures on 'Man's Place in Nature,' admirably worked out its most important developments. With luminous clearness, and convincing certainty, he has here established the fundamental law, that, in every respect, the anatomical differences between man and the highest apes are of less value than those between the highest and the lowest apes."

Huxley's work on birds may be regarded as an incident in his general work on the morphology and classification of Vertebrates, although his contributions to ornithological literature place him in the front rank among investigators of the affinities and relationships of the various groups of birds to each other, and of birds as a class to other Vertebrates;

for in the ordinary sense of the term Huxley was not an ornithologist. As early as 1864 he marshalled birds with reptiles under one grand division, or 'province' of the Vertebrata under the name Sauropsida, opposed on the one hand to the Mammalia, and on the other to the Ichthyopsida, consisting of fishes and amphibians. His principal and epoch-making ornithological memoir appeared in 1867, entitled 'On the Classification of Birds; and on the Taxonomic Value of the Modifications of certain of the Cranial Bones observable in that Class' (P. Z. S., 1867, pp. 415-472, with 36 figs. in text; see also *Ibis*, 1868, pp. 357-362). This was followed in 1868 by his important paper 'On the Classification and Distribution of the Alectoromorphæ and Heteromorphæ' (P. Z. S., 1868, pp. 294-319, with a map and 16 figs. in text). These two papers may be considered as his principal special contributions to the literature of ornithology. While a synopsis of these papers is perhaps uncalled for in this connection, it is of interest to note the insistence—then a novel idea—here made (P. Z. S., 1867, p. 415) "that in all the essential and fundamental points of their structure" birds so nearly approach reptiles "that the phrase 'Birds are greatly modified Reptiles' would hardly be an exaggerated expression of the closeness of that resemblance." Professor Huxley's classification, as is well known, was based primarily, and, in case of many of the minor groups, almost solely on the palatal structure, thus giving prominence to an unquestionably important set of characters previously almost overlooked. As is inevitably the case with any classification based on a single set of characters, the allocations here and there are bound to be more or less unnatural, and Huxley's scheme is not an exception. Yet the importance of his memoirs can scarcely be overrated, and their influence has been far-reaching.

In common with most of the learned societies of the world, the American Ornithologists' Union has honored itself in its attempt to show respect to Professor Huxley by enrolling him in its list of Honorary Members,—as much perhaps in recognition of his eminent attainments in all fields of biological research as in the special field of ornithology.

Any notice of this great man would be reprehensibly incomplete without some further reference to his wonderful influence upon the scientific thought of his time, and his rare gifts as a writer and lecturer. In his battles for evolution he has upheld unflinchingly what he believed to be scientific truth, and with a boldness and efficiency that has no parallel. As a fitting conclusion to this brief notice may be added the following selections from his own words: "To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its ugliest features is stripped off.

“It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable, or unreasonable, ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends; to the popularization of science; to the development and organization of scientific education; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science.

“In striving for the attainment of these objects, I have been but one among many, and I shall be well content to be remembered, or even not remembered, as such.”

MR. HENRY SEEBOHM, an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in London, Nov. 26, 1895, after a short illness, although he had been in weak health since an attack of influenza some six months previously. According to a recent notice in the London 'Times,' Mr. Seebohm "came of an old Quaker family, and was born at Bradford, in Yorkshire, where as a child he showed an extraordinary love of natural history, and used to study every kind of animal which was to be met with on his father's property. He was educated at the Friends' School at York, where his love of nature still showed itself in the collections of ferns, birds, and their eggs, which he began to make at the time. For many years afterwards he was immersed in business at Sheffield, where he became very successful as a steel manufacturer; but all through his business struggles he never lost his attachment for ornithology, and made short expeditions to various parts of Europe to gain an original experience of the habits of birds for his 'History of British Birds,' which he had in contemplation. In the course of these studies he visited most of the countries of Europe, Greece, Asia Minor, Russia, Norway, Denmark, Heligoland, many parts of Germany and Austria, the Engadine, Holland, and parts of France. In company with Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown he undertook, in the summer of 1875, his celebrated expedition to the valley of the Lower Petchora, in northern Russia, in quest of the eggs of the Gray Plover and the Little Stint, both of which they managed to find, though they did not succeed in discovering the eggs of the Curlew Sandpiper. In 1877 he went alone to the valley of the Yenisei, in Siberia, and again obtained important ornithological results. On this occasion his ship was wrecked, and he built another, which he named the 'Ibis,' and in which he successfully returned to England by the North Cape."

In addition to numerous important papers in various scientific journals, Mr. Seebohm is the author of several monographs and faunal works of high value, among which are his 'Catalogue of the Turdidæ' (1881), forming Volume V of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds¹; 'A His-

¹ Cf. Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VII, pp. 99-104.

tory of British Birds' (2 vols., 1883-84)¹; 'The Geographical Distribution of the Charadriidæ, or the Plovers, Sandpipers, Snipes, and their Allies' (4to, 1888)²; 'The Birds of the Japanese Empire' (1 vol. 8vo, 1890)³; 'Classification of Birds: an attempt to diagnose the Subclasses, Orders, Suborders, and some of the Families of existing Birds' (1890).⁴ His two chief works of travel—'Siberia in Europe' and 'Siberia in Asia'—have attained well-merited popularity, on account of the interest of the regions visited and the pleasant manner in which the narratives are presented.

Mr. Seebohm was an earnest and original investigator and a vigorous and at times a somewhat aggressive writer. He was also untrammelled by precedents and traditions, which to some extent detracted from the utility of his work, but on the other hand gave him an independence that favored the development of new lines of thought and the adoption of new methods.

MR. HENRY T. WHARTON, a Corresponding Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died recently at his home in Hants, England. Mr. Wharton was a well-known expert on British birds, an important list of which was published by him in 1877. Mr. Wharton was also Secretary and General Editor for the B. O. U. Committee, appointed in 1878 to draw up a list of British Birds, which was finally published in 1883. Mr. Wharton not only acted as editor, but contributed the etymological notes relating to the scientific names.

WE REGRET to learn that Volume II of Major Bendire's 'Life Histories of North American Birds,' although in type since last July, is not likely to be issued for several months, owing to delays in the Government Printing Office at Washington.

Two courses of ornithological lectures are to be given as the third series of Biological Lectures at Columbia College, New York, during January 1896, the courses being respectively by Mr. Frank M. Chapman, Assistant Curator of Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History, and by Professor C. Lloyd Morgan, F. R. S., of University College, Bristol, England, author of 'Animal Life and Intelligence.' The courses will consist of four lectures each, and will be given in the Hall of the Academy of Medicine, 17 West 43d Street at 5 P. M. on Tuesdays and Fridays. Mr. Chapman's course will be on 'The Distribution, Migration, Nesting, Colors, and Structural Adaptations of Birds,' and will occur on January 7, 14, and 28, and February 4. Professor Morgan's course is entitled 'The Instincts of Birds in Relation to Habit and Inheritance,' and will be given on January 10, 17, 24, and 31. Tickets for the two courses may be procured at the College offices or at the Biological Department of the University.

¹ Cf. Auk, II, pp. 88-91.

³ *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 99-101.

² *Ibid.*, V, pp. 189-194.

⁴ Cf. Ibis, 1890, pp. 379-381.

THE KENT ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB was reorganized at Grand Rapids, Mich., on Dec. 12, 1895, under the name of the Michigan Ornithological Club. The following officers were elected for 1896: A. B. Durfes, President; R. R. Newton, Vice-President; W. E. Mulliken, Secretary; Prof. C. A. Whittemore, Treasurer; Leon J. Cole, Librarian.

The Club will take up a systematic study of the birds of the State and it is hoped all Michigan ornithologists will address the Secretary, 191 First Avenue, Grand Rapids, Mich., for particulars at once.

AT THE Thirteenth Congress of the A. O. U. Mr. William Dutcher, in behalf of the 'Committee on Protection of North American Birds,' stated that the same precautions had been taken during the breeding season of 1895 as in 1894, regarding the protection of Terns on Great Gull Island, New York. A special game protector had been employed, several of the Natural History Societies of New York City contributing toward the payment of his salary. Absolutely no shooting had been done and parties who visited the island during the summer were prevented from collecting eggs. As Great Gull Island is the property of the United States Government it will always be a breeding ground for Terns, if properly protected. The number of birds now in the colony on this island was estimated at 3500—a large increase from the previous year. Mr. Dutcher thought that the numerous cottages now built and being erected on all portions of the New York coast would prevent the Terns from again nesting there.

Mr. William Brewster said that the Terns on Muskeget Island, Mass., had increased from year to year, the result of protection. No birds had been shot on or near the island the past year and very few eggs had been collected. A notable increase was seen also in the colony of Laughing Gulls at the same place. Great credit is due Mr. Geo. H. Mackay for his continuous efforts in saving the Gulls and Terns on this island from destruction.

Mr. Witmer Stone knew of only one colony of Terns on the New Jersey coast. As the birds nested back in the meadows and away from the coast, it was difficult to protect them, but he did not think they decreased in numbers. In recent years the 'egggers' (so-called) had destroyed immense numbers of the eggs of the Clapper Rail which nested in favorable localities along the coast of New Jersey. This Rail had increased the past season, as game wardens had watched the meadows and arrested several marauders.

Mr. Leverett M. Loomis remarked upon the wholesale destruction of birds and their eggs on the California coast during 1895.

A new 'Committee on Protection of North American Birds' was appointed, as follows: William Dutcher (Chairman), Ruthven Deane, Witmer Stone, Leverett M. Loomis, and Geo. H. Mackay.