

judged from the angle at which we saw them. They were very large flocks, and were unfortunately too distant to make their identity sure. That they were of the goose tribe was shown by their manner of flying, the V-formation being very perfect, and, as the flocks had upwards of a hundred in each, the long lines were not always perfectly steady, but waved slowly up and down like a blade of kelp in deep water. They may have been brant, or they may have been any one of the greater ducks, but they certainly were not gulls of any sort, and my belief is they were Canada Geese. I am very familiar with the flight of geese, and these flocks had all of the characteristics I have been accustomed to attribute to this regular migrant.

My question is, where were they bound at such an early date? They were heading into an open sea, and unless they changed their course, I do not believe they would have even sighted the Azores Islands. They may have been following some favorite great circle, or an upper air current not recognizable from the sea level.

The question was further brought home to me this morning (Sept. 17) by seeing from my window at half past seven o'clock, at Peacc Dale, R. I., eight Wild Geese, near enough to be sure of, also flying south in an irregular manner, as if they had begun their fall migration. The date strikes me as being very early, and the suggestion of an early winter is undoubtedly conveyed to those wise in weather signs.

I should be glad if you could inquire through the columns of 'The Auk' for other notes of the southward flight of geese this year, and especially if anyone can suggest the probable destination of the flocks seen at sea.

ROWLAND G. HAZARD,

*Peace Dale, R. I.*

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## NOTES AND NEWS.

THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONGRESS of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, beginning on the evening of Monday, November 11, 1901. The evening session will be for the election of officers and members and for the transaction of the usual routine business. Final action will also be taken on the proposed amendments to the By-Laws, relating to the classes of membership, as approved at the last meeting of the Union (see *Auk*, Jan., 1901, p. 128). Tuesday and the following days, the sessions will be for the presentation and discussion of scientific papers, and will be open to the public. Members intending to present communications are requested to forward the titles of their papers to the Secretary, Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn., so as to reach him not later than November 8.

In connection with the A. O. U. Congress there will be a conference of representatives of the Audubon Societies, for the purpose of forming plans for more effective coöperation.

NEWTON DEXTER, for a time an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died suddenly of apoplexy, at Seaconnet Point, near Providence, R. I., July 27, 1901. His father was Samuel Dexter, of the eminent Rhode Island family of that name, and his mother was the daughter of James Fenner, a former governor of Rhode Island. He was educated at the Lyons Grammar School of Providence, where he prepared for Brown University, but gave up his college course for a period of foreign travel. He early displayed great interest in natural history pursuits, and especially in ornithology. He was an ardent sportsman-naturalist, and although he acquired an excellent knowledge of birds, and collected extensively, he published very little. In 1865 he was one of the volunteer assistants who accompanied the elder Agassiz on his well-known expedition to Brazil, and a large part of the extensive collection of birds obtained on this expedition was due to the industry and enthusiasm of Mr. Dexter. Later he traveled extensively in the Far West, while it was still an 'Indian country,' and during recent years he usually spent his winters in Florida, hunting and fishing, and collecting more or less incidentally. He was very modest and unassuming, avoiding publicity, and pursued his natural history investigations for the pleasure he took in them, publishing very few of the results. He presented from time to time many rare birds to various natural history museums, and was especially interested in the Roger Williams Park Museum of Providence. An intimate friend of his writes of him: "He was a staunch friend, genial and liberal in disposition, and careful to disguise his many kind acts."

FRANCIS J. BIRTWELL, an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at Willis, N. M., June 28, 1901. Mr. Birtwell was spending the summer at this quiet mountain resort in the Pecos River forest reserve that he might complete his book, 'The Ornithology of New Mexico,' and record a series of careful investigations on the influence of food and environment on the plumages of birds.

It was in an attempt to secure a valuable nest some 65 feet from the ground that the young scientist lost his life.

Mr. Birtwell was born in London, Eng., in September, 1880, and came to this country at an early age. From the Boston high schools he entered Bussey Institute, and from here had arranged to become a student in the Lawrence Scientific School, Harvard University; but, while studying, in the summer of 1899, in the Brooklyn Biological Laboratory, he found he was the victim of tuberculosis, and went to New Mexico. He was in the Territorial University for the next two years. Next year he was to have taken a degree at the Territorial College of Agriculture, where they "needed a man of his earnest ability." 'The Ornithology of New Mexico' had been accepted as a thesis for graduation.

During his brief life, Mr. Birtwell had been an industrious ornithologist. From his earliest youth he evinced a remarkable interest in the study of birds, which attracted the attention of local ornithologists. He was an active member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. He founded the Elliott Coues chapter of the Agassiz Society of Jamaica Plain, of which he was president until leaving for the west. He was the founder and first president of the Roxbury High School branch of the Agassiz Association, was a charter member of the American Bird Restorers' Association, and, for two years, kept the records of bird migration for his section for the Department of Agriculture at Washington. Through the friendship of Dr. Coues, he became a member of the A. O. U. He was a contributor to 'The Auk,' 'The Osprey,' 'The Nidologist,' 'Science,' 'Popular Science,' the Boston 'Transcript,' and the Dorchester 'Beacon.'

The Dorchester 'Beacon' speaks of him as "an exceptionally brilliant young man,— a man possessed of a deep and thorough knowledge of the flora and fauna of his country, and a finished, graceful and interesting writer. . . . His contributions throbbled with love of Nature in her every form. His latest and, alas that we must say, his last contribution to the 'Beacon,' dated Albuquerque, Jan. 15, was reminiscent of the old Back Street woods and a plea for the salvation of the few remaining fields and woods of Dorchester." Dr. Coues wrote of an article young Birtwell had submitted to him that he knew of no other boy of his age who could have written so ably, and he predicted for him a great future.

At the time of the crusade against the House Sparrow in Mayor Quincy's administration in Boston, young Birtwell was the principal speaker in denunciation of the bird.

In May last, Mr. Birtwell was married to Miss Olivia Morton, a native of Iowa.

The peculiar conditions affecting faunal life in New Mexico were of especial interest to Mr. Birtwell. Though he had, in his few years, accomplished much, "his keen powers of observation, his independence of thought," and "his tireless zeal" made him "a young man whose career promised to be of great service to ornithology."—O. M. B.

AN AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, we are pleased to note, has recently been inaugurated and will hold its "first General Meeting at Adelaide in October or November," for the election of officers and permanent organization. The objects of the Society, as stated in its 'Provisional Rules,' are "the advancement and popularization of the Science of Ornithology, the protection of useful and ornamental avifauna, and the editing and publication of a magazine or periodical, to be called 'The Emu,' or such magazine or periodical as the Society may from time to time determine upon." The financial year of the Union began the 1st of July, 1901, and the first number of 'The Emu' is to be issued early in October. A 'general meeting' is to be held annually, "in the capital of one or other of the

different States, such capital to be decided at the previous Annual Meeting." In purposes and methods this second 'A. O. U.' is planned on much the same lines as our own A. O. U., and we wish it equal success.

THE BIRD CLUB OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY was organized early during the present year with the following officers: President, William Arthur Babson, B. S.; Vice-Presidents, Edward Wallace Scudder and John Rogers Williams; Secretary-Treasurer, Daniel Minor Rogers; Recorder, Charles Frederic Silvester. Its activity is evinced by the 'Bulletin of the Bird Club of Princeton University,' the first number bearing date September, 1901. "The Club will issue further Bulletins at such intervals as the accumulation or importance of original matter may warrant." The first number consists of 82 pages, giving a list of the officers and members of the Club, and an excellent annotated list of the birds of Princeton, as already noted (p. 408). Mr. W. E. D. Scott is editor of the 'Bulletin.'

DANA ESTES AND COMPANY of Boston announce in their list of fall publications the long expected new edition of the late Dr. Coues's 'Key to North American Birds.' The work, we understand, had been completely rewritten, and left in readiness for publication by its lamented author, and will contain a large number of wholly new illustrations, made expressly for the work, by Mr. Fuertes.

AN 'INDEX-VOLUME' to the 'Zoölogical Record' will soon be published, at the subscription price of 15 shillings (10 shillings to subscribers to the 'Zoölogical Record'). The index volume will cover the volumes XVII-XXXVII (1880-1900) of the 'Zoölogical Record,' and will include not only all of the new generic and subgeneric names, but such names as were omitted in the previous volumes, as well as those omitted from Scudder's well-known 'Nomenclator Zoölogicus,' published in 1882. Thus zoölogists may have at their disposal (in the 'Nomenclator Zoölogicus' and the new Index together) a complete list of all names of genera and subgenera used in Zoölogy up to the end of 1900. The subscription-list will be closed on the 1st of December, 1901, but a limited number of copies will be placed on sale at the price of £1 per copy.

A WORK entitled 'A Manual of the Birds of Iceland,' by the Rev. H. H. Slater, is announced for early publication by David Douglas, 10 Castle St., Edinburgh. It will embody the results of Mr. Slater's fifteen years' observations on the birds of Iceland. The subscription price is 5s net.

THE large collection of birds' eggs, nests and skins brought together by Miss Jean Bell of Ridley Park, Pa., has been purchased by Mr. John Lewis Childs, of Floral Park, New York. It is said to contain about 30,000 eggs and 1000 nests, and is reported to be one of the finest and

most complete private collections of North American birds' eggs extant. It includes many rarities, and is rich in large sets of comparatively rare species, the collection having been formed through the combination of several noteworthy private collections.

THE EXPEDITION sent out by the Department of Entomology and Ornithology, University of Nebraska, during the summer of 1901 spent the interim between May 25 and July 27 in the Pine Ridge region of north-west Nebraska, and consisted of the following members: Prof. Lawrence Bruner, Mr. J. C. Crawford, Jr., Mr. M. A. Carriker, Jr., and the writer. Prof. Bruner and Mr. Crawford spent but a short time in camp however, being called back to Lincoln by official duties.

The ornithological work was very successful and of considerable importance. Especially is this true in regard to breeding records, of which several new ones were added to the already large number of Nebraska breeders. The ranges of a number of birds were considerably extended, and various notes of interest in regard to the western species gathered.

A goodly number of sets of eggs, skins and photographs of birds, their nests and eggs are the result of the season's collecting, and will go to enrich the Department collection. A few general notes as to some of the more important results might be of interest; but for more specific details the 'Proceedings' of the third Meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union should be consulted.

Several colonies of White-throated Rock Swifts were found breeding in cracks and crevices on the face of almost inaccessible cliffs, and a number of their rare sets secured—eighteen eggs in all.

The breeding of the Sage Grouse, Brewer's Blackbird, Western Warbling Vireo, McCown's Longspur, Louisiana Tanager, Piñon Jay and Western Lark Sparrow was definitely established, although in each case confined to a comparatively small area in the extreme northwestern corner of the State.

Among other interesting things the Mockingbird was found breeding on Antelope and Indian Creeks, near the South Dakota line.

All of these additional breeding records, range-extensions, etc., will be of great value in a revised work on Nebraska birds. — MERRITT CARY  
*Neligh, Nebr.*