

RECENT LITERATURE.

Jubilee Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union.—The Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the British Ornithologists' Union was celebrated on Wednesday, December 9, 1908, at the house of the Zoölogical Society of London, 3 Hanover Square, with appropriate addresses and the presentation of medals to the surviving Founders, followed by a dinner in the evening at the Trocadero Restaurant, attended by 81 members and 24 guests. At the meeting letters and telegrams were read from the South African Ornithologists' Union, the Ornithologische Gesellschaft in Bayern, from a number of Foreign Members, and an address from the Deutsche Ornithologische Gesellschaft.

An address by the President, Dr. F. Du Cane Godman, summarized briefly the work of the B. O. U. and its members, and the wonderful recent progress of ornithology. It was noted that in 1864, when the first volume of the 'Zoölogical Record' was published, only "120 papers on ornithology were enumerated for the previous year, while on turning to that for 1907 there were no less than 1760, or fifteen times as many as there were thirty-three [forty-three] years earlier." He also stated that in 1872 there were only about 30,000 stuffed birds and bird-skins in the British Museum, while now there are 500,000, or sixteen times as many as in 1872. "These two instances," he added, "will give some idea of the progress ornithology has made since the foundation of the British Ornithologists' Union." He also referred to the leading contemporary journals of ornithology, as the 'Journal für Ornithologie,' begun by the German Ornithological Society six years before 'The Ibis'; and adding: "Perhaps the Society next in importance is the American Ornithologists' Union, with its quarterly Journal 'The Auk,' a most valuable work chiefly devoted to the birds of its own Continent."

The President's address was followed by the reading of a "short history of the Union" by Dr. P. L. Sclater, and some details of the 'Biographical Notices' were given by Mr. A. H. Evans. These include sketches, mostly short, of the twenty Founders, the principal contributors to the first series of 'The Ibis,' and of the present officials of the Union, with portraits of each. Then followed the presentation of medals to the four surviving original members of the Union, namely, Dr. F. Du Cane Godman, Dr. P. L. Sclater, Mr. W. H. Hudson, and Mr. Percy Godman.

The 'Proceedings' of this memorable celebration have now been issued as a special 'Jubilee Supplement' to 'The Ibis,'¹ forming a volume of 272 pages, illustrated with 40 portraits. This fascinating record consists: (1) Proceedings (pp. 1-18); (2) A Short History of the British Ornithologists' Union (pp. 19-69); (3) Biographical Notices of the Original Members, the

¹ Ninth Series, Vol. II, 1909. Published March, 1909, pp. iv + 268, and 40 pl. (portraits).

principal contributors to the first series of 'The Ibis' (1859-1864), and the present officers (pp. 71-232); (4) List of Members (pp. 233-268).

Dr. Sclater's history of the founding of the Union recounts the first steps taken in the formation of this great agent in the promotion of ornithological research during the half century now just ended. The account of the inaugural meeting, held in the rooms of the late Professor Alfred Newton at Magdalene College, Cambridge, November 17, 1858, is less full than could be desired, no formal record of it having been found. It apparently comprised eight ornithologists, who decided upon a list¹ of twenty persons who were to be invited to become founders. Two resolutions were adopted, which were to the effect that an Ornithologists' Union of twenty members should be formed, "with the principal object of establishing a new Journal entirely devoted to Birds"; and that Lieut-Col. H. M. Drummond should be the President, Professor Newton the Secretary, and Dr. Sclater the Editor of the proposed Journal. Steps were immediately taken by the Editor to secure a publisher, and the first number was ready for the press about the middle of January, 1859. Then follows a history of 'The Ibis,' volume by volume, for the next fifty years, giving briefly the principal events in its history and in that of the Union, from which we learn that the first general meeting of the B. O. U. was held in London on November 9, 1859; but the minutes of this meeting, like many other early papers relating to its organization, "have not been found." At the annual meeting held in 1860 it was voted to elect ten Honorary Members from "ornithologists not residing in the United Kingdom," among whom were Professor S. F. Baird of Washington and John Cassin of Philadelphia. The only other Americans on whom this honor has been conferred are Robert Ridgway, elected to this class in 1903, and the Editor of 'The Auk,' in 1907. In 1872 a new class, designated as Foreign Members, was instituted, to which fifteen distinguished foreign ornithologists were elected, among whom were two from America — Coues and Lawrence. In later years were added Ridgway in 1880, Marsh in 1883, Allen in 1890, Stejneger in 1900, Chapman in 1902, Oberholser in 1905, and Richmond in 1908.

The 'List of Members' includes the names of all who have been elected to the different classes of membership since the organization of the Union, this roll numbering 719, of which the roster at the close of 1908 carried only 473, a large number having died in the half century of the Union's existence. Of the 650 elected to the class of Ordinary Members, only 343 were in good standing in 1908, deaths, resignations, and delinquency in payment of dues accounting for the large reduction in the half-century total. Of the 3 elected as Extraordinary Members, 2 remain; of 21 elected as Honorary Members (limited to 10) 11 have passed on; the class of Colonial Members, instituted in 1903 and limited to 10, numbers 8, with 1 deceased; the list of Foreign Members (limited to 20) contains 19; of the 36 who have received this honor 17 have died.

¹ A facsimile of this list, in the handwriting of Newton, with additions in the handwriting of Sclater, is here given (plate facing p. 21).

While the membership roll, giving as it does the date of election, the date of death of deceased members, the date of resignations, etc., has the strong element of personal interest that always attaches to such a record, the biographies and portraits have permanent value as a concise history of a large number of the leading British ornithologists, many of whom have finished their work and left an enviable record.

The Jubilee Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union is further noteworthy as the occasion of the initiation of a plan proposed by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant for the exploration of the Charles Louis Mountains in Dutch New Guinea, which are believed to rise to an altitude of from 16,500 to 17,500 feet, and to constitute at the present time "beyond doubt the finest unknown ground in the world." It is Mr. Grant's desire to associate this undertaking with the British Ornithologists' Union, "so that it may be known as the 'British Ornithologists' Union Jubilee Exploration of the Charles Louis Mountains'." The proposition, when put to vote, received unanimous approval, and a Committee was appointed to coöperate with Mr. Grant in securing the necessary funds for the enterprise.—J. A. A.

Thayer and Bangs on the Birds of Guadaloupe Island.¹—Guadaloupe Island is situated off the coast of Lower California, about 220 miles southwest of San Diego. Practically nothing was known of its fauna till 1875, when it was visited by the well-known collector Dr. Edward Palmer. He obtained eight species of land birds, represented by 72 specimens. On investigation of this material Mr. Ridgway² found that while each species had a near relative on the mainland, the Guadaloupe forms were so far differentiated from them in each case as to warrant their recognition as distinct species. These differences consisted in the increased size of the bill and feet, shorter wings and tail, and darker colors in the island forms, due to insular environment. The island has since been repeatedly visited by ornithologists, including W. E. Bryant³ in 1885, who increased the number of species known from the island from 9 to 36, all land birds except 4, but adding none to the 8 previously described as peculiar to the island. Mr. Bryant, however, gave for the first time a detailed account of the topography, climate, and vegetation.

In the spring of 1906, Mr. W. W. Brown, Jr., with two assistants, visited the island in the interest of Messrs. Thayer and Bangs, and the present paper gives the results of Mr. Brown's work. Reference is made to the

¹ The present state of the Ornis of Guadaloupe Island. By John E. Thayer and Outram Bangs. *Condor*, Vol. X, No. 3, May-June, 1908, pp. 101-106.

² Ornithology of Guadaloupe Island. By Robert Ridgway. *Bull. U. S. Geol. and Geogr. Surv. Terr.*, Vol. II, No. 2, April, 1876, pp. 183-195.

The Birds of Guadaloupe Island, discussed with reference to the Present Genesis of the Species. By Robert Ridgway. *Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club*, Vol. II, No. 3, July, 1877, pp. 58-66.

³ Additions to the Ornithology of Guadaloupe Island. By Walter E. Bryant. *Bull. California Acad. Sci.*, No. 6, pp. 269-318, Jan., 1887.