

nesting places, my thoughts wandered back over the dear old times and companions of years ago. I often go to the favorite old places to live it all over again."—HENRY K. COALE, *Highland Park, Ill.*

Notes on *Ectopistes migratorius*.—Along in the sixties and early seventies, when millions of Passenger Pigeons made their yearly pilgrimage to their northern Michigan and Wisconsin breeding grounds, a man by the name of Tom Stagg made a business of supplying live Pigeons for trap shooting matches. He owned forty acres, a house and large barn at the north-west limits of Chicago (now Fullerton and Diversy Avenues).

The outside sheeting of the barn was removed and the sides latticed with laths, making the building one huge cage. With an assistant, Byron E. Clarke, who is still living at Hinsdale (a suburb of Chicago), he made regular trips to the Pigeon roosts near Muskegan, Michigan, and Portage, Wisconsin, to get live birds for the shooting matches.

The Pigeons were in such great flocks that they covered all the branches of the pine trees, and by going among them at night, they could be taken by hand from the lower branches by hundreds. They were dropped into bags, and transferred into crates and shipped. At times Mr. Stagg had as many as 5000 or more in his big cage. He provided watering troughs and feed before re-shipping to his customers, the average price being \$1.25 a dozen.

When the Pigeons were put into this huge cage they were so thirsty, that many drank themselves to death, or were killed in the mad scramble for water. In 1876 R. A. Turtle (now a taxidermist in Chicago) took 3500 Passenger Pigeons in crates to the annual live pigeon shoot in New York, which was run by Greene Smith, who was known to many of the older A. O. U. members, when he accumulated a large collection of birds at his home in Peterboro, N. Y. When this shipment reached its destination, most of the birds had worn the skin and feathers off the top of their heads from contact with the crates.

There was also the Abe Kleimann trap grounds near Chicago, where thousands of the Pigeons were shot. The writer, George Clingman and Joseph Hancock (still living) picked up dozens of wounded birds, which fell outside the fence. Mr. Clingman recently gave his fine collection of mounted birds to the Bryn Mawr High School of Chicago.—HENRY K. COALE, *Highland Park, Ill.*

Economic Status of *Coragyps urubu* in British Guiana.—When I was in Georgetown, during the winter of 1920–21, the Black Vulture was one of the commonest birds about the city. It was an everyday experience to see them sitting in rows on the roofs of houses, while the public abattoir, within the harbor, rarely had less than 30 or 40 about the buildings, apparently on the lookout for slaughter-house offal. Now one gets only a distant glimpse of occasional individuals flying high in air; at least nine-tenths of these municipal scavengers have disappeared, and I have not yet noticed a single bird roosting on a ridgepole.

Until 1921, attempts made by the Government Health Department to organize a campaign against these "carrion crows" failed, owing to local prejudice, although the birds were said to be a source of serious pollution of the drinking water, largely supplied by roof drainage in this region of torrential rains. Last year, as I was leaving the colony, I learned that an ordinance had finally passed the town council authorizing the shooting of the vultures by the police. To what extent this law has meantime been carried out I am unable to say, but a great many "crows" were undoubtedly killed and (probably) many more frightened away, to become denizens of the country districts where, in the absence of a regular system of carrion disposal, they will, without doubt, be of definite value as scavengers.

Although the agitation for the removal of the Black Vultures did not result in their immediate destruction, yet the public were to some extent convinced that they were a source of filth, and perhaps of disease, through defilement of the water supply. As a consequence, quite a number of buildings were "protected" from contamination by means of various devices.

The most common scheme was that of affixing an upright of serrated iron, or several strands of wire supported at intervals of three or four feet, along the whole length of the ridgepole, so that the vultures could not alight or roost upon it.

Analyses of the cistern water collected from effectively "protected" roofs proved the wisdom of this precaution, as it was found to be uniformly free from pathogenic bacteria, while reservoirs filled from "unprotected" roof-areas (and especially those known to be patronized by carrion crows) were often shown to be infected by morbid germs.

The Government Medical Officer of Health, Dr. E. P. Minett, informs me that while the rain water used by the European residents in the colony is generally boiled before use, it is doubtful if this precaution can be relied upon as carried out by native cooks, and the danger of infection is a very real one where carrion crows abound, as these filthy birds have been shown to communicate pathogenic bacteria to the water supplies by their habits of carrying filth to the roof; also, their feces have been proved to contain purulent pathogenic microbes. Many analyses carried out by the Department on the excrement of these vultures demonstrate that they are fully endowed with polluting powers, and from their habits and situation freely exercise them. Although something may be said in their favor as scavengers in extra-urban localities, their presence in a city of 60,000 inhabitants, with an organized health department boasting a large sanitary staff, is as unnecessary as it is dangerous. It is recognized that to make the movement continuously successful it may be necessary to repeat the vulturine holocaust, lest there be a return of the birds from their country resorts.—CASEY A. WOOD, *Georgetown, Brit. Guiana.*