

OBITUARIES.

THE American Ornithologists' Union and the American Museum have suffered irreparable loss by the death of Waldron De Witt Miller. On the morning of August 4th, after leaving Plainfield, N. J., on one of his frequent trips by motorcycle to the northern edge of the pine-barrens, he was approaching South River, N. J., when he collided with a motor-bus. His injuries were so grave that he expired on August 7th.

Of modest and even retiring nature, Miller was everywhere recognized as one of our foremost ornithologists. Born in 1879, he became an Associate of the Union in 1896, a member in 1906, and a Fellow in 1914. Since boyhood he had been an exceptionally keen outdoor student of birds. Growing up in Plainfield, he came to the notice of William Dutcher and thus of Dr. Chapman, who brought him to the American Museum of Natural History in 1903. His developing talents ensured promotion, until in 1918 he was made Associate Curator in Ornithology.

Miller's early papers in systematic ornithology were based on collections made by J. H. Batty in Mexico. His interests grew ever wider, and he undertook investigations of pterylography and skeletal features, including among his activities a study of the classification of Kingfishers. A trip to Nicaragua in 1917, accompanied by Ludlow Griscom, offered new opportunities for deepening his acquaintance with tropical birds, and his notebooks record the thoroughness with which he examined the specimens collected, before their preparation was completed.

His thirst for anatomical knowledge which could be utilized in classification was always increasing. Focussing his attention for several years on the Woodpeckers and their allies, he worked out the course of specialization in their development which has culminated in the Ivory-bill group. In recent years practically all the birds dying in the New York Zoological Park passed through his hands, providing rich material for his enthusiastic studies. His knowledge of pterylography, particularly of the wing, was unsurpassed. Special attention was also given to the digestive tract, carotid arteries, thigh and shoulder musculature, plantar tendons, and the many parts of the skeleton which offer evidences for the development of the major groups among living birds. He became deeply versed in the characters of Parrots and their allies. Birds of prey were cherished both alive and dead, and statistics as to their food was gathered on field-trips and in the laboratory.

During his 26 years of service to the American Museum, Miller continued his field-work assiduously. Scarcely a week-end or holiday passed without an excursion to some part of New Jersey, generally within 50 miles of his old home at Plainfield. A motorcycle was used to cover the territory which he surveyed so continuously and so fondly. To those who sometimes ac-

accompanied him on these trips he showed himself a true naturalist of devoted and unselfish character, astonishing in the wide field of his interest. He was thoroughly familiar with the flora, as with birds and mammals, and indefatigable in searching for snakes. These he would examine and measure before releasing them, hoping to find a few of them again on subsequent visits.

To his desk at the Museum, not only visiting ornithologists, but sportsmen, artists, game-wardens, teachers, and bird-lovers old and young, were attracted in numbers. Never did they leave without receiving whatever assistance he could give, and this was usually in abundance. In such ways, more than through writing, did Miller disseminate knowledge of birds. All who knew him testify to the unstinted aid and enlightenment they were given. To his colleagues at the Museum he was an unfailing fount of information and sound ornithological counsel. To this wide circle of admirers and warm personal friends his passing is a calamity.—J. P. CHAPIN.

HERBERT CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON, a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1918, died at Oxford, England, May 30, 1929, at the age of 54, after being in poor health for nearly a year. He was descended from a prominent Liverpool family, the son of John Park and Mary Morris Robinson, and was born at Liverpool, Nov. 4, 1874. His education was received at Marlborough College where he developed a taste for natural history and at the Royal School of Mines, but illness prevented completion of his course at the latter institution. In 1894 he went to Davos, Switzerland, and two years later had recovered sufficiently to undertake an expedition to Queensland. Here he collected birds in the vicinity of Cooktown but was compelled to return on account of illness. From 1897 to 1900 he became an assistant of Dr. H. O. Forbes in the Liverpool Museum and took part in the publication of a series of catalogues of the collections of birds in that institution, most of which had been presented by the 13th Earl of Derby.

In 1900 Robinson began twenty-five years of active field work in the tropics when he joined Dr. N. Annandale in an expedition to the Malay Peninsula and part of the results of this expedition appeared in the 'Fasciculi Maylayensis' from 1903 to 1907. He became Curator of the Selangor State Museum at Kuala Lumpur in 1903 and subsequently was made Director of the Federated Malay States Museums, a post which he held until 1926. In addition to the museum at Kuala Lumpur he was also in charge of the museum at Taiping in Perak. In 1908 he was joined by Cecil Boden Kloss with whom for nearly 20 years he carried on active zoological explorations in the Indo-Malay region, many of the results of which have appeared in the 'Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums.' He reorganized the Museum at Kuala Lumpur, and in passing it may be mentioned that its valuable collection of vertebrates has recently been transferred to the Raffles Museum at Singapore. In addition to this

work he found time to organize a Bureau of Fisheries, a Meteorological Service, and to investigate the possibility of founding hill stations in the Malay Peninsula. In 1924 and 1925 he was in England in charge of the Malayan Pavilion at the Wembley Exposition, and after his retirement made a final visit to Kuala Lumpur in 1927. He then returned to London to work on his project of the 'Birds of the Malay Peninsula,' in five volumes, of which two were published and a third half done when illness caused a suspension of the work.

Robinson was unmarried, was elected a Member of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1898, and at the time of his death was Joint Editor of 'The Ibis.' A more extended notice of his work from which the above facts have been obtained may be found in 'The Ibis' for July, 1929, pp. 523-526.—T. S. P.

ANTHONY RUDOLPH KUSER, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1908 and a prominent patron of ornithology, died after a brief illness on Feb. 8, 1929, at his winter home at Palm Beach, Fla. He was born at Newark, N. J., May 12, 1862 and was one of six children of Rudolph and Rosalie Prieth Kuser.

In spite of many business interests chiefly power and electrical—he was a director in 54 corporations and had served on the State Tax Board, the Highway Commission and on the personal staff of three governors—Colonel Kuser found time to devote considerable attention to birds and conservation. He was also a member of several clubs including the Blooming Grove Park Club of Pike Co., Pa., and the Chelsea Plantation Club of South Carolina. At his home at Bernardsville, N. J., he maintained for several years an extensive collection of pheasants and his special interest in these birds developed into a project for a more comprehensive monograph on pheasants than any hitherto published and based on original information collected in the field. As a member of the Board of Managers and a Benefactor of the N. Y. Zoological Park he succeeded in carrying out this project through the Kuser Expedition, organized by the Zoological Society, under the personal direction of William Beebe who spent 17 months from Dec., 1909 to May, 1911 studying the birds in their native haunts in Ceylon, India, Burma, the Malay States, Java, Borneo, China and Japan.

The results of this expedition were published in Beebe's 'Monograph of The Pheasants,' a sumptuous illustrated work which appeared in 4 volumes in 1918-22, and in a smaller edition in 2 volumes in 1926 (see 'The Auk,' 1919, pp. 119-125 and 1927, p. 267).

Colonel Kuser was active in advancing the work of the New Jersey Audubon Society and served as its president for two years. His contributions to science and conservation took the form of providing means of carrying out through others projects which were carefully planned and well executed. In this respect his work was well worthy of emulation. A handsome species of Blood Pheasant (*Ithaginis kuseri*) from Yunnan now bears his name but for the general public the Kuser Expedition, the

pheasant monograph, and the gift to the State by Colonel and Mrs. Kuser of their beautiful estate at High Point, Sussex Co., N. J., are the enduring monuments by which this modest but far-sighted patron of science will long be remembered.—T. S. P.

HOWARD GEORGE LACEY, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, elected in 1899, died at Bournemouth, England, March 5, 1929, in the 73rd year of his age. He was born at Wareham, Dorset, England, April 15, 1856 and was educated during his early years at Charterhouse in Hampshire, but later he studied at Frankfort, Germany and received the degree of B.A. from Cains College, Cambridge, England. At the age of 26 he came to America and located in south central Texas, on a ranch on Turtle Creek, about 10 miles from Kerrville. Here he made his home for 40 years and devoted his attention to raising horses, cattle and Angora goats.

Howard Lacey was much interested in natural history and soon became an authority on the fauna and flora of this part of Texas. He maintained a wide correspondence with naturalists in various parts of the country and those who visited the State received a cordial welcome at the Lacey Ranch. He collected many natural history specimens but published comparatively little. His chief ornithological publications were two papers on 'The Birds of Kerrville, Texas, and Vicinity,' in 'The Auk' for 1911 and 1912, which contained notes on the local occurrence of 208 species. In recognition of his activity in zoological work his name has been bestowed on three forms of small mammals: *Peromyscus pectoralis laceianus*, a white-footed mouse from Kerrville, *P. boylei laceyi* and *Reithrodontomys laceyi*. The last two names, however, are now usually placed in synonymy.

In 1919 Lacey disposed of his ranch at Kerrville and returning to England settled near Bournemouth. Since then he has revisited Texas only once, during a brief trip in 1925. He is survived by a sister, Miss Beatrice Lacey of Bournemouth, and three brothers, Ben, Charles, and Sir F. E. Lacey of London.—T. S. P.

WILLIAM FLORIAN ROBERTS, an Associate of the Union from 1888 to 1899 and since 1924, died in Washington, D. C., Feb. 18, 1929. Last November he suffered from double pneumonia and complications following that attack resulted in his death. He was born in Washington, July 14, 1855, received his education in the local public schools and began work as a messenger boy for the Western Union Telegraph Co. Later he learned the printer's trade and organized the Law Reporter Printing Co., then the Gedney and Roberts Co., and in 1891 the W. F. Roberts Co., of which he was president at the time of his death.

Roberts was always actively interested in outdoor sports and was a member of several local organizations including the Potomac Boat Club, the old Capital Bicycle Club and the Columbia Country Club. For some years he was a member of the Glebe Club, a shooting club on the Patuxent River, and later of the Belmont Bay Club on the Potomac, and always

maintained a keen interest in rail and duck shooting. He was well acquainted with the common local birds, especially the game birds, and years ago began to make a collection of skins. His early field work was done in association with Ridgway, Henshaw, Fisher, William Palmer and others. Two of the species on the local list of birds of the District of Columbia were originally added on the basis of specimens which he collected,—the Lark Sparrow, taken Aug. 25, 1877, and the Dowitcher, Sept. 2, 1878, the former recorded by Ridgway and the latter by himself. He also contributed several important records of game birds secured in the course of his long experience as a sportsman. One of his activities in connection with the Union was in handling the programs for several of the early Washington meetings and the personal attention which he gave the work always insured accuracy and prompt delivery. Roberts excelled in whatever he undertook and through his cheerful and cordial manner gained a host of friends and was widely known in business and athletic circles of the Capital.—T. S. P.

GEORGE RIVERS WHITE, the oldest Canadian Associate of the Union, died near Ottawa, Ontario, Nov. 27, 1927 at the age of 71. Death came suddenly and peacefully as he was admiring the setting sun while on a Sunday afternoon walk. He was born at Quebec, Oct. 3, 1856, and at the early age of 15 entered the service of the Post Office Department where he remained for half a century until he retired in 1921. During this time he became an authority on postal matters and fully conversant with the various details of the service.

White began collecting in the days when Passenger Pigeons were still found about Ottawa and his collection contained several specimens of these interesting birds which he himself obtained. Members who attended the Ottawa meeting of the A. O. U. in 1926 and had the pleasure of examining the White collection will recall the neatness and compactness of its arrangement. It was one of the best local collections in Canada and included a number of specimens which constituted important records for the Ottawa region. Unfortunately White published comparatively little, chiefly records and lists of the birds of Ottawa. He was one of the founders of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club and was a member of its Council at the time of his death. He joined the American Ornithologists' Union in 1903 and for 24 years continued as an Associate. For 45 years he contributed notes on bird migration to the Biological Survey. He now rests in Beechwood Cemetery in a part of the forest where he made many of his bird records. A portrait and a more extended account of his activities, from which the above facts were obtained, may be found in the 'Canadian Field Naturalist' for May, 1929, pp. 13-14.—T. S. P.

ROBERT DESHAN CAMP, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1926, died at Brownsville, Texas, August 6, 1929, after an illness of seven months during which he lost his eyesight. He was the son of Alfred E. and Adeline J. Camp and was born at Meriden, Conn., March

6, 1867. His education was received at a boy's school and in the local high school, supplemented in later life by constant reading. For some time he was connected with a novelty manufacturing company in Chicago and for 20 years was engaged in general engineering business.

Camp took up his residence in the Rio Grande Valley in 1908, living first at Lyford but later made his home at Brownsville. Here he developed his interest in natural history until he became known as one of the most active local collectors and one of the best authorities on the fauna of the Lower Rio Grande region. For several years he was connected with the Game, Fish & Oyster Commission of Texas and for nine years—since April 16, 1920—he served as a U. S. Deputy Game Warden. He was deeply interested in conservation of wild life, took an active interest in protective legislation, and largely through his efforts the bird reservation in southern Texas for the Reddish Egret and other Herons was established by the State in 1921 and leased to the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Camp was buried in Buena Vista Cemetery at Brownsville, and in accordance with his desire that the natural history specimens which he brought together should remain in the Valley, the collection has been offered to the City of Brownsville. He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. John J. Young, of Glen Ellyn, Ill., and Mrs. May R. Kavanaugh, of Chula Vista, Calif., and by a daughter, Mrs. Catheryn Shimmens, of Fresno, Calif.—T. S. P.

JOHN WARREN ACHORN, elected as an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1921, died on August 5, 1926. He is best known to ornithologists through having sponsored for many years the study of birds in the sandhill region of North Carolina near Pine Bluff, where he made his winter home. Here he was active in encouraging observation of bird life, both among the young people native to the region, and among the older ones who, like the birds, made the sandhills their winter rendezvous. The Sandhills Bird Study Club, which he served as president, was the result of his devotion to this work.

It was his ambition to issue a list of the winter birds of this section, and this project, interrupted by his death, has since been consummated by the publication of a memorial volume, well illustrated in color, made possible by the efforts of a few of his devoted friends. Several chapters of this are from his own pen, and reflect his love for the region and its life.¹

Dr. Achorn was born at Newcastle, Maine, on Jan. 30, 1857. He was educated at Bowdoin College and the Maine Medical School, and practiced in Boston for about twenty years. That he was a life-long lover of nature is evidenced by the titles of several of his publications—*Nature's help to Health, Nature's help to Happiness, and Religion and Medicine.*

¹A Guide to the Winter Birds of the North Carolina Sandhills, by M. P. Skinner, Albany, New York, 1928. (See *The Auk*, Apr. 1929, p. 254.)

He called himself a "woodser," which was his original way of expressing the fact, evident to anyone who had enjoyed the privilege of walking with him in the open, that he loved the outdoors in all its wholesome aspects.

In 1907 he married Harriet Priscilla Sawyer who became his constant companion in his peregrinations, and who, while he was studying the birds, was an equally enthusiastic student of the wild flowers.

The love of humanity was strong in Dr. Achorn's make-up. This was shown in his choice of a profession, and later in his efforts to assist his fellows in the appreciation of Nature. Many of his friends will long remember his Christmas or New Year greetings, which for many years took the form of short printed essays, generally inspired by some outdoor experience, and featuring, mayhap, the homely native philosophy of some friend or chance acquaintance, Anglo-Saxon or African. These, and an occasional letter, always reflecting his strong and wholesome personality, will be treasured by those whose fortune it was to know him.—EDWARD A. PREBLE.

JEWELL D. SORNBORGER, elected an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1888, and Member in 1901, but retired in 1908, died in Rowley, Massachusetts, on Feb. 24, 1929. He was born on Nov. 27, 1869. Always a keen student of ornithology, botany and other branches of natural history, he made three visits to Labrador in the pursuit of these studies in the nineties, and, in 1897, visited Funk Island off Newfoundland. Here he collected a large number of the bones of the Great Auk, from which he mounted several perfect skeletons, which are now preserved in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge and in some other museums.

In 1896 he suffered his first attack of a disease of the heart and arteries, and from then on, he was increasingly subject to these attacks, which invalidated him for long periods and finally resulted in his death. About 1901 he moved to Ipswich, and about a year later to the neighboring town of Rowley, where he lived the rest of his life. A careful and accurate observer and of a quiet and retiring disposition, he was an interesting talker on his chosen subjects, in which he kept up his interest to the last. In his long illnesses he was patient and uncomplaining. He leaves a widow and three daughters.—C. W. TOWNSEND.