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IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT WILSON SHUFELDT,
1850-1934.

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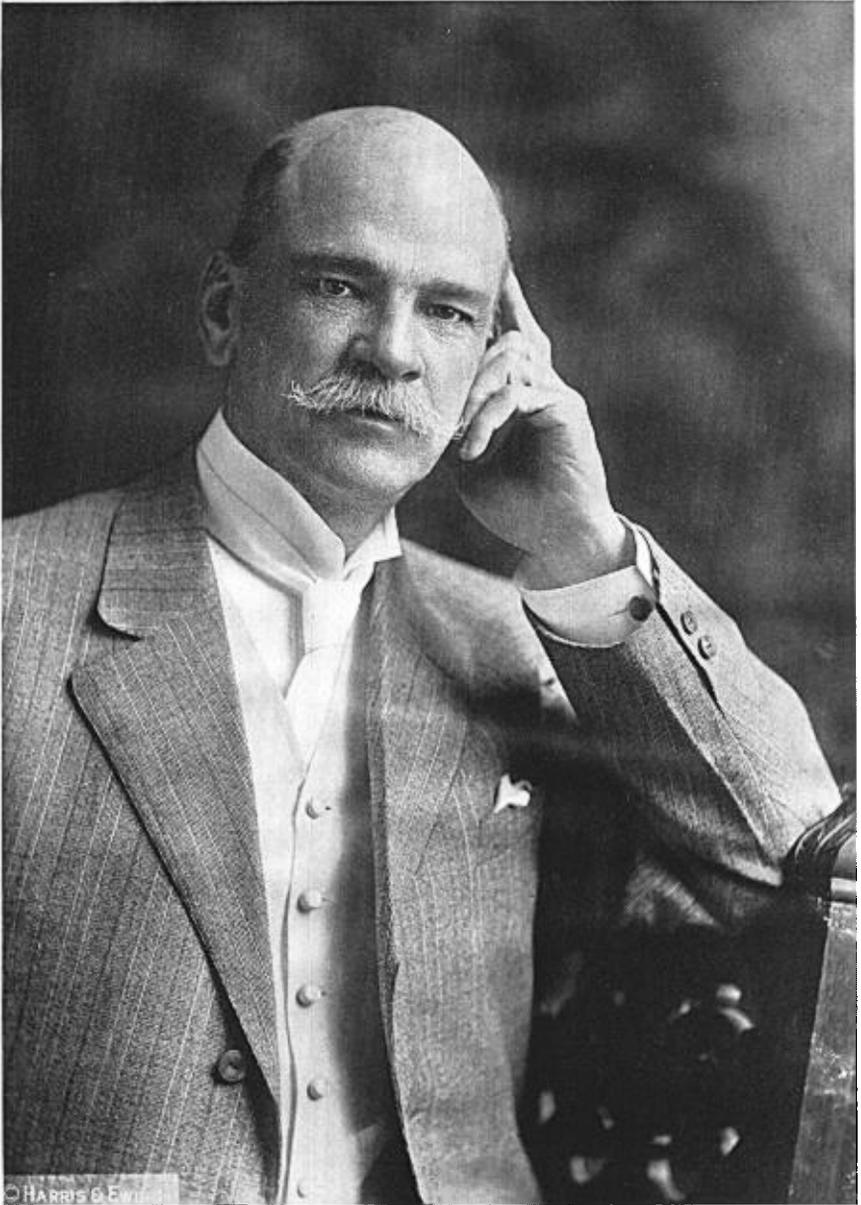
Plate XVI.

ORNITHOLOGICAL science in America has lost one of its most zealous workers and pioneers. R. W. Shufeldt was from the eighties until the end of the second decade of the present century one of the most diligent and worthy investigators of detail in the science of osteology and paleontology of birds; he worked also in other fields; in general biology, anthropology, forensic medicine and museology.

He was the son of Admiral Robert Wilson and Sarah H. (Abercrombie) Shufeldt and was born December 1, 1850, in New York. He attended several schools in the United States and in Havana, Cuba, and in the Civil War, in 1864-65, he saw service as captain's clerk and signal officer with the rank of midshipman aboard the U. S. Gunboat 'Proteus,' commanded by his father. In 1872 he entered the medical school of Cornell University and in 1876 received his degree in Washington, D. C., from Columbian, now George Washington, University. In the same year he received an appointment as Lieutenant in the Medical Department of the Army and was ordered to Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Md., as assistant surgeon; later he served as surgeon on the frontier in the campaign against the Sioux Indians.

In 1882 Shufeldt was made a curator in the Army Medical Museum and afterward served as an honorary curator in the Smithsonian Institution. He was retired for disability from the army in 1891 with the rank of Captain and promoted to Major in 1904. At the time of his retirement he was serving as post surgeon at Fort Wingate, New Mexico. During the World War he was restored to the active list, placed on duty at the Army Medical Museum, and finally retired January 9, 1919.

Shufeldt began his literary activity when he was still a practicing surgeon. He had a rich zoological and botanical collection, the former forming the



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basis of his first publications on the osteology and systematics of the different species and families of birds. Shufeldt was married three times, in 1876, 1895, and 1898. His first wife was Catherine Babcock, his second Florence Audubon, grand-daughter of J. J. Audubon, and his third a Norwegian lady, Alfhild Dagny Lowum.

Prior to 1913 Shufeldt published more than 1100 articles, books, short notes and papers, many of his studies appearing in popular reviews of natural history.¹ The list of his works on anatomy and systematics of birds prior to 1909 appeared as a supplement to his 'Osteology of Birds' published as Bull. No. 130, New York State Museum, 1909, and comprised about 160 titles. All of his publications on the osteology of birds and on paleontology are cited in my work, 'Handbuch der Palaeornithologie,' Berlin, Berntraeger, 1933; and are quoted 256 times in the index.

With the exception of the Ostriches, and their allies and the Kiwis, Tinamus, Colies and Trogons, Shufeldt dealt very thoroughly with the osteology of the orders of birds. Taking them in their proper sequence, he contributed to our knowledge of the osteology of the following groups:

Osteology of Penguins, 1901; Taxonomy of the Pygopodes, 1892-1904; Bill of *Diomedea*, 1885; Osteology of the Tubinares, 1888, 1889, 1907; Osteology of the Steganopodes, 1898; Osteology of the Phalacrocoracidae, 1913; Description of the Osteology of *Phalacrocorax atriceps georgianus*, 1914; Osteology of *Nannopterum harrisi*, 1915; shoulder girdle of *Fregata*, 1904; Osteology of the Ardeines, 1889; and Herodiones, 1901; Osteology of the Water Birds, 1888; Osteology of *Palamedea* and *Chauna*, 1901; Monograph of the Genus *Dendrocygna*, 1914; Osteology of the Cathartidæ, 1881, 1909; *Geococcyx californianus*, 1886; *Circus hudsonius*, 1889; *Pandion*, 1891; Accipitres, 1909; and *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, 1919; also Osteology of the Tetraonidæ, 1881, 1909; *Agriocharis ocellata*, 1913; *Columbidæ*, 1891, 1901; Coccyges, 1901; Osteology of *Nestor*, 1918; *Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea*, 1881, 1889; Striges, 1900; Trochilidæ, Caprimulgidæ and Cypselidæ, 1887; osteological description of *Ceryle alcyon*, 1884; Halcyones, 1903; Pici, 1891, 1900; *Eremophila alpestris*, 1881; *Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*, 1881; *Cinclus mexicanus*, 1881; *Tachycineta*, 1887; *Sturnella neglecta*, 1888; *Chamaea*, 1889; *Procnias*, 1890; *Sarcops calvus*, 1907; *Arachnothera magna*, 1909; *Anthochaera carunculata*, 1913; and *Habia melanocephala*, 1888.

Most of his osteological descriptions are fundamental and though written in the somewhat lengthy style of the eighties and nineties are of value because they treat of forms which have not been examined and described since.

Next to systematic questions, Shufeldt was interested in problems of comparative morphology, as seen chiefly in his 'Osteology of Birds' already

¹ In his bibliography (Medical Review of Reviews, XXVI, New York, 1920) there are more than 1500 titles. An incompleated autobiography appeared in 'Medical Life' XXXI, 1924.

mentioned, and in some of his minor papers: Complete Fibula of Birds, Patella of Phalacrocoracidae, etc. Special attention is due his 'Myology of the Raven (*Corvus corax sinuatus*),' 1890, which, together with Gadow's and Garrod's myological works, represents the best monograph of the muscular system of birds.

Beside the osteology of recent birds, Shufeldt studied also their paleontology. The bird remains from the Equus beds and the Silver Lake region, Oregon, dating from the Upper Pliocene to the Pleistocene, were made objects of his investigation; he also revised the Marsh collection of birds in the Peabody Museum, Yale University, and described 32 fossil species.

Several of his fossil forms have had to be revised as to their generic or systematic position. *Palæochenoides miocænus*, placed by Shufeldt in the Anserine group, belongs to the Pelicans, *Phalacrocorax marinavis* and *mediterraneus* belong to the new genus *Oligocorax*, *Tantalus milne-edwardsi* to *Pseudotantalus*, *Phasianus roberti* and *miocænus* to the genus *Archæophasianus*, *Grus marshi* to *Protogrus*, *Euphagus affinis* to *Scolecophagus*, *Palæospiza hatcheri* to *Palæostruthus*. The following forms have fared even worse: *Puffinus mcgalli*, *P. parvus*, *Ardea sellardsi* and *Larus vero* have been identified by Wetmore with *Puffinus puffinus*, *P. l'herminieri*, *Meleagris gallopavo* and *Nyctanassa violacea*, respectively; *Aquila ferox* and *Minerva antiqua* prove to be Edentate remains, and *Aquila lydekkeri* belongs to the new genus *Protostrix*.

In spite of these errors, Shufeldt has the merit of being one of the pioneers of North American Paleornithology. He described 43 new forms, and because of the pioneer character of his work, he was liable to make a few mistakes. Nevertheless, most of the forms which he described and named are valid.

His popular works on oölogy, museology and medicine are very numerous; he also contributed to mammalogical and herpetological literature by anatomical descriptions of *Heloderma suspectum*, *Amia calva* and a monograph of the *Procnatiidae*. His most important anthropological work bears the title 'America's Greatest Problem: The Negro.'

Shufeldt was a collaborator of Newton's wonderful 'Dictionary of Birds.' He was one of the Founders of the American Ornithologists' Union and was transferred to the list of Retired Fellows in 1927.

After the World War we, in Europe, heard no more of him, and the many friends and colleagues with whom he had maintained an animated correspondence waited in vain for the usual interesting letters from him. His last years were passed in a sanitarium and, after a prolonged and serious illness, he died at Washington, D. C., January 21, 1934.

The memory of his active mind, his imperturbable love of work and his productive pen will long be honored in the annals of the history of ornithology, especially in the pages dealing with osteology and paleontology.