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IN MEMORIAM: JOHN CHARLES PHILLIPS, M.D.

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Plate 8

At rare intervals in a lifetime one finds a man who corresponds to one's cherished ideal; who at each contact rings true and clear; who seems, as Marcus Aurelius said, to 'live with the Gods.' John Phillips was such a one. Endowed with high qualities of mind and spirit, imbued with a keen sense of human responsibility and a desire for service, he measured up to lofty standards. Tall and lithe of figure, with clear-cut handsome features, and a merry twinkle in his dark eyes, he was a personality to be remembered for his quiet force, a straightforwardness that could countenance no sham, and an earnestness of purpose that without show or apparent effort accomplished great things.

Bred to wealth and position, he carried forward the best traditions of his New England heritage. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on November 5, 1876, the son of John Charles and Anna (Tucker) Phillips; he was a great-grandson of John Phillips, first Mayor of Boston, and a great-nephew of Wendell Phillips. He prepared for college at Milton Academy and graduated from the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University in the Class of 1899, thus continuing the long line of Harvard graduates that his forbears had created, beginning with Samuel Phillips of the Class of 1650. His serious interest led him to enter the Harvard Medical School, from which he received the degree of M.D. in 1904. After graduation he acted as House Officer at the Boston City Hospital for two years, thereby gaining further experience, but he never practiced medicine in a professional capacity. On January 11, 1908, he married Miss Eleanor Hyde of Bath, Maine. Two sons and two daughters, their children, survive him, as do his wife, two brothers and two sisters.

From his youth Dr. Phillips was keenly interested in outdoor life, particularly in hunting, fishing, canoeing, and this soon developed into a love



John C Phillips

of intelligent travel which often led him in later years to far horizons. Always his journeys had in view a first-hand acquaintance with natural conditions in distant regions, and the pursuit or observation of wildlife. He appears to have kept a journal of important events from boyhood, and in 1915, he published his 'Boy Journals, 1887-1892' in a very small edition for private distribution. This valuable habit no doubt made easier the frequent preparation of brief accounts of his observations and reflections. In various shorter journeys he visited many parts of the western United States and Canada, and in 1900 published a short account of his first bighorn-sheep hunt in Wyoming. The region of the present Glacier National Park attracted him long before it was thought of as a public reservation, and several of its prominent geographic features now bear the names he gave them. In 1896, while still in the midst of his college career, he accompanied Peary as far as Greenland, on one of the North Polar expeditions. Ten years later, we find him with his friend Theodore Lyman, visiting Japan and Korea, with a digression into South China to hunt tiger. More serious expeditions he undertook in 1912-13 to the Blue Nile valley and the borders of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), and in 1914 to Sinai and Palestine, bringing back important collections of birds and mammals which he presented to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. Other travels took him to out of the way corners of North America: Newfoundland, Alaska, Lower California; he spent part of a winter in hunting mountain lions and peccaries in the mountains of Arizona, and in 1938 with Dr. Thomas Barbour, visited Cuba and Florida. His last extensive expedition was in 1923-24, when with his wife and son, John, he traveled through Kenya Colony, to Uganda and the eastern Belgian Congo, partly with a view to seeing the African game fields, with their contrasts of plain and forest. He was the first secretary of the Harvard Travellers Club, organized in 1902.

It was my own good fortune to have accompanied Dr. Phillips on his Blue Nile journey, now well over a quarter of a century ago. The memories of that trip, in spite of its many difficulties, still remain an abiding delight, quite as much for the joy of association with one of his genius as for the added knowledge of this part of the earth. For Dr. Phillips took a keen interest in the things he saw, whether his fellow men, the wild game, or the glorious country. As a campmate his even temper and bright sense of humor helped to carry over temporary discomforts. I well recall our first day out with camels—it was Christmas—and his amusement at the announcement of our absurd little 'dragoman' George: 'Sir, it is very wonderful what has happened to our lunch.' It seemed that stray dogs had made way with it during the previous evening. Thereafter, the task of provisioning was not left wholly to George. Although Dr. Phillips enjoyed the

thrill of good hunting, he cared little about the shooting of animals for trophies, but preferred that the game he secured should be properly preserved for museum study.

Following the outbreak of the Great War, Dr. Phillips felt that his medical knowledge should be turned to account to help his fellow men, with the result that in November 1915, he joined the Second Harvard Surgical Corps for service abroad. He was commissioned an Honorary Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps and assigned to General Hospital No. 2 of the British Expeditionary Force. On the completion of that service he returned home, but in September 1917, with the entrance of this country into the struggle, he was given a commission in the United States Army Medical Corps as First Lieutenant. In December of the same year, he was made a Captain, and in May 1918, as Major, he was appointed Commanding Officer of the 33d Field Hospital of the Fourth Regular Army Division. He took part in three important offensives in France and afterward was with the Army of Occupation in Germany. He returned to the United States in July 1919, after twenty-six months of war service, of which fourteen were spent in France and Germany.

The wide extent of Dr. Phillips's interest in natural history is well reflected in his published writings, a list of which he prepared and issued in 1933. A glance at this list with its 169 titles, to which he later added 35 more, reveals the progress of his thought from matters concerning hunting and field observation to more serious studies of problems in genetics, with occasional faunal and systematic papers, especially on the ducks and geese, while in later years the difficulties and needs of conservation became increasingly matters of concern. Foremost in his interest were the waterfowl. On the shores of Wenham Lake, bordering his beautiful estate, he maintained a ducking stand where annually he followed the arrival and departure, the changes and fluctuations in numbers of the many ducks and geese that stopped there on passage. Shooting was a passion with him, not only of waterfowl but also of upland game. With a well-trained dog, he delighted to tramp the covers for woodcock or grouse, enjoying quite as much the exhilaration of being in the fields and woods as the thrill of an occasional successful shot. Always he was a 'sportsman' in the best sense, believing in fair play for the game, moderation in hunting, and careful protection where conditions showed the need. Natural resources he regarded as a heritage to be enjoyed legitimately, administered wisely, and handed on to the coming generations with the least impairment possible. In this, unfortunately he often found his fellow sportsmen far less openminded, a state of affairs that frequently called forth from his pen straight-flung words of warning and protest against short-sighted policies.

In his bibliography, the first item was a short account in 'Forest and

Stream' for 1900 of his first hunt for bighorn in Wyoming; this was followed by other notes in the same journal on night-hunting for Black Duck, the game value of the newly introduced pheasants, the game animals of Glacier National Park, and notes on the habits of moose. In 1910, appeared his first article in 'The Auk,' a paper on the autumnal migration of Canada Geese in Massachusetts, and in succeeding years there followed other papers on the waterfowl migrations. In these years, too, he carried out several interesting experiments with the collaboration of Professor W. E. Castle in transplanting germinal tissue in guineapigs, and up to the outbreak of the War, he made a number of valuable studies on hybridization in ducks and pheasants. He maintained for a number of years a large collection of living waterfowl, pheasants, and cranes at his Wenham estate, finding much of scientific as well as esthetic interest in the characteristic behavior and appearance of these handsome birds. With an ever-increasing appreciation of the needs of conservation, we find him from 1915 onward, preparing frequent communications on such subjects as the suggested introduction of ibex into our Southwest, the opposition to the new Federal Migratory Bird Law, propagation of game, the need of sanctuaries, cruelty in sport, the sportsman and the 'zoöophile,' the legitimate use and encouragement of wild-life resources. His special interest in ducks at length bore fruit in the production of his four splendid quarto volumes on 'The Natural History of the Ducks,' 1922-26, in the preparation of which his thoroughgoing method of work was evidenced in the employment of a skilled linguist for several years in the culling and transcription of important published notes from scientific and other publications in nearly every European language. The expense of this publication with its handsome colored plates he largely bore himself. His versatile mind appreciated also the historical aspects of natural history, a viewpoint that led him from time to time to publish in book form a number of valuable records that otherwise might have been lost to sight, among these, excerpts from George Washington's journals concerning the sporting activities of that Great American, the fishing adventures of John Rowe of Boston drawn from the eighteenth-century diaries of that gentleman, the 'Shooting Journal of George H. Mackay, 1865-1922,' and an account of shooting stands in eastern Massachusetts, to be followed later by a collection of 'Classics of the American Shooting Field' and other sporting sketches including a sumptuous small volume, his final one, on the history of Wenham Lake, that came out shortly after his death. Perhaps one of the most valuable of his later works was a bibliography of books concerning American game mammals and birds published between 1582 and 1925, a compilation that will prove increasingly useful as future workers endeavor to review the past history of these species. In 1930, he published in collaboration with F. C. Lincoln, an important book on 'American Waterfowl' summing

up the present situation and speculating on the outlook for the future. All this and much more, reveals his intense concern in matters pertaining to the welfare of game animals and, more especially, the alarming destruction of natural resources in modern times and the urgent need for reforms. He appreciated good writing and in his own works strove to cultivate accurate expression with well-rounded form. In surveying his well-chosen library of books on sport and natural history, he commented on the ragged-looking shelf of American books on hunting and exploration in comparison with the more sumptuous works of many British writers.

A complete account of Dr. Phillips's public service would be a lengthy chronicle. He was Research Curator of Birds in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, and at various times made generous gifts of specimens to that institution, including a splendid collection of horns and antlers of game mammals, among them a number of record heads, which he had brought together over many years. He was a member of the Faculty of the Peabody Museum in Cambridge since 1931, and for several years was President of the Board of Trustees of the Peabody Museum in Salem. His interest in the Boston Society of Natural History extended over a long period and he was in recent years one of its Trustees. He was Chairman of the former Massachusetts Conservation Council and for six years President of the Massachusetts Fish and Game Association. He was a founder and for seven years, Chairman of the American Committee for International Wildlife Protection; while as 'American Observer,' he attended several International Conservation Conferences abroad, thus devoting in the aggregate, a large portion of his later effort to the cultivation of a wider appreciation of the meaning and requisites of 'conservation.' In 1919, he was elected a member of the Boone and Crockett Club, of which he served as Vice-president from 1928-32, and was for a number of years a member of its editorial board. He first became a member of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1904 and was elected a Fellow in 1925. He was an honored member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, though he seldom found it possible to attend its meetings, and at the time of his death was a director of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Withal Dr. Phillips was an extraordinarily modest and self-effacing person. He disliked all appearance of notoriety, and could only with great difficulty be persuaded to give a 'paper' or any account of his work before public or private gatherings. Yet he was fearless in the proper expression of his disapproval of any pernicious practice and exerted a strong influence in securing the passage of certain needed legislation by Congress.

In his later years he spent his winters with his family at Seven Oaks Plantation on John's Isle, South Carolina, where the milder seasons placed less of a strain on his system, after a winter of illness. He wrote me of

canoeing up to a sleeping alligator and of enjoying the flowers while we in New England were still under snow. On November 14, 1938, he was grouse hunting in southern New Hampshire with a friend, when he died suddenly of heart failure just as his dog came to a point and ere the bird flew. Wise, generous, talented, he strove all his life to give freely of his best, in a high spirit of service. For his shining example the lives of us all are richer.

(Acknowledgments are due to Dr. Thomas Barbour for his kind permission to draw for various facts upon his memorial of Dr. Phillips, privately printed in January 1939.)