

OBITUARIES

ARTHUR COPE EMLÉN lived for the greater part of his life amid the pleasant surroundings at Awbury, in Germantown, Pennsylvania, where he was born on April 9, 1882. Through his mother he was related to the great naturalist, Edward Drinker Cope. A deep love of Nature, developing at an early age, went hand in hand with his subsequent profession of landscape engineering. From boyhood he had been a devoted friend of Dr. Witmer Stone's, and had been associated with him in the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club since 1897. During late years he had probably been Dr. Stone's chief intimate. After Dr. Stone's passing in 1939, Arthur Emlén doubtless filled his place in the D. V. O. C. as nearly as any member possibly could. He had served as vice-president from 1933 to 1936, and as president from 1936 to 1938, and he was especially active in the field trips of the Club. He was much more inclined to derive enjoyment from quiet communion with Nature than to spread his observations on the printed page.

On graduating from Germantown Friends' School in 1901, Arthur Emlén enjoyed a summer of travel and bird study in England. He became an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1921, and was particularly fond of attending its annual meetings, going as far as Charleston for this purpose in 1937. Of late he had served as secretary of the Ludwick Institute, which for many years has been providing free public lectures on natural history in cooperation with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. His interest in, and efforts in behalf of, Nature education brought him recognition in the form of election to the Board of Trustees of the Academy of Natural Sciences in 1940. He succeeded Dr. Stone as president of the Wissahickon Bird Club, and from 1935 to 1940 he had been president of the Germantown Historical Society.

The end came suddenly on January 26, 1941, at Jacksonville, Florida, shortly after his departure for a vacation trip in the South. A minute adopted by his fellow-members of the committee in charge of the Friends' Free Library in Germantown refers most fittingly to 'his kindness, his sincerity, his modesty, his selflessness, his good sense.' But it is scarcely possible with mere words to do full justice to the memory of such a remarkably fine man and faithful friend as Arthur Emlén was.—FRANCIS HARPER.

GIDEON MABBETT.—More than fifty years ago appeared a brief note in 'The Auk' for October 1890, pp. 410-411, entitled 'A Query in regard to the Least Tern.' The author, Gideon Mabbett of Rodney, Mississippi, wrote to the Editor of 'The Auk' as follows: "I wish to inquire about a peculiarity in the nesting habits of the Least Terns or, as they are commonly known here, the 'Little Sea Gulls.' They generally arrive here about May 6 (this year, May 13) to breed on the sand bars of the Mississippi River. If the water is off the bars they begin laying about the middle of June, and they continue to lay until August, for I have found their eggs as late as the middle of the latter month. . . . Upon examining the eggs you will find perhaps half of them have a spot of water on them. How did it get there? Is it put there by the parent bird, and if so, for what purpose?" The writer never received an answer to his inquiry for he died August 15, 1890, and was buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery at Rodney, a few weeks before his letter was published.

Little is known of Mabbett's history or personality and for the following facts

thanks are due Mr. Malcolm Gardner of the National Park Service of Jackson, and Judge Jeff Truly of Fayette, Mississippi. Mabbett was a bachelor and at the time of his death was apparently about seventy years of age. He was born in England, probably in Liverpool, and while still a boy, came to the United States prior to 1830. He evidently served in the Confederate Army. Local records in 1858 mention G. C. Mabbett as subject to military duty and at the close of the war give the name as Gideon Mabbett and still subject to military call.

He acquired a farm near Rodney in 1874 where he lived in a three-room house, two rooms of which were filled with natural-history specimens. He was a successful trapper and taxidermist and was apparently prominent locally, for some time after 1875 he was elected justice of the peace for his precinct. In 1884 and 1885, Mabbett sent notes on bird migration to Professor W. W. Cooke and at the Washington meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union he was elected an Associate member, the first member of the Union in Mississippi. He left few papers and his only contribution to 'The Auk' was the note mentioned above. Some of his specimens were acquired by the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Starkville, now known as the Mississippi State College.—T. S. PALMER.