

OBITUARIES

MILLARD CLAYTON ERNSBERGER, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union for five years, died at Ithaca, N. Y., January 25, 1940, in his 78th year. He was the son of Daniel W. and Hannah (Warne) Ernsberger and was born at Varick, Seneca Co., N. Y., June 12, 1862. He graduated from the University of Rochester with the degree of A.B. in 1888 and from Sibley College, Cornell University, with the degree of M.E. in 1908. Ernsberger was admitted to the bar in 1891 and practiced law for six years in New York City. After two years spent as manager of the illustrating departments of the New York Tribune and eight years as draftsman and designing engineer with MacIntosh, Seymour & Co., builders of steam engines, at Auburn, N. Y., he returned to Cornell as Assistant and Instructor in Power Engineering in Sibley College. He served as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Rochester from 1909 to 1921, and on April 30 of the latter year was appointed Professor of Heat-Power Engineering at Cornell.

Prof. Ernsberger was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and was elected an Associate of the A. O. U. in 1934. He did not contribute to 'The Auk' and apparently published little if anything on birds, but this is not surprising when it is recalled that he was 72 when he joined the Union. He was unmarried.—T. S. PALMER.

GUSTAVE KOHN, who was elected to associate membership of the Union in 1886, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 18, 1837, and died in Neuilly, France, September 7, 1906. His early education was received in New Orleans, and later his studies were extended in France.

He was keenly interested in natural history subjects, and was quite active in making collections, especially of birds and mammals, not only for himself but for others who needed material from Louisiana. He secured a series of fox squirrels for Dr. J. A. Allen, and sent his collection of turtles to Doctor Baur of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, who was planning a monograph on the subject. In working over this material, Doctor Baur found a well-recognized new form of map turtle which he described, and in honor of Kohn named it *Malacoclemmys kohnii*. The U. S. Biological Survey received numbers of specimens as gifts or exchange from him, and always was glad to assist in the identification of material of which he was in doubt. Later he gave his rather large and valuable collection to Tulane University. The city directories gave his vocation as that of a capitalist.

Kohn was a quiet, unassuming man of pleasant approach, attentive and interested while in conversation with friends on subjects of mutual understanding. After our several meetings in New Orleans, and time went on, we often were in correspondence touching on some subject that was of mutual interest.

During the autumnal migration, before sale was prohibited, he frequently visited the French market and noted the numbers and species of song birds that were there on sale. In a letter dated October 22, 1890, he reported: "I saw in the game market the day before yesterday, hundreds of dozens of wood thrushes for sale, also quite a number of rose breasted grosbeaks, scarlet tanagers, a few summer red birds, and some bunches of olive back thrushes. All of these birds were extremely fat, and were killed near Mandeville on the north side of Lake Pontchartrain. They were selling at one dollar a dozen retail." In a letter dated October 29, 1890, he gives this information: "The daughter of the wood thrushes stopped a few days after my letter was sent. A cold spell drove the birds further south, and very few birds are

now to be seen in market. We shall not see them any more for sale until October, 1891."

Kohn was interested in learning what species were to be found in the market, their season, their abundance and which seemed to be the favorite morsel of food. In our talks he gave me interesting information on this subject new to me. It seems almost a perversion when a markedly insectivorous species, on its southern migration feeds almost entirely on the fruit of the magnolia, bayberry (*Myrica*) and similar species and in a short time becomes obese. Among the earlier species to reach the market were the Kingbirds (Gros grasset) and Red-eyed Vireo (Petit grasset) which were fat and sold for one dollar a dozen. Before the Red-eyed Vireos and thrushes leave the north, sometimes they will eat the berries of the spice bush or sassafras in case they are found ripe, both of which have a similar flavor to that of the magnolia. The Wood Thrush (Caille de Laurier) seemed to be a marked favorite, and at times sold as high as two dollars a dozen. In winter the Tree Swallow (Cerier) fed largely on the wax bayberry, and became very fat, selling in plucked dozens for fifty cents. The Cedar Waxwing (Murier) and Robin (Grive) also were winter species, but unlike the Wood Thrush were not so fat and brought seventy-five cents only.—A. K. FISHER.

ROBERT STATHAM WILLIAMS had been an Associate of the A. O. U. for 59 years when he died in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on March 13, 1945. He was an Honorary Associate for a number of years before his death. He was born in Minneapolis, May 6, 1859, the son of Thomas Hale Williams, founder and first librarian of the Minneapolis Athenaeum which was the forerunner of the Minneapolis Public Library. It was through the influence of Thomas Hale Williams that Dr. Kirby Spencer, a dentist, bequeathed to the Athenaeum his considerable fortune which made possible the acquisition of the large collection of art, technical, and scientific works present in the Public Library today, since Dr. Spencer stipulated in his bequest that no religious work nor fiction should be purchased with the money.

Robert was educated in the Minneapolis High School and University of Minnesota though he did not graduate from either. He was early interested in natural history, with birds predominating at first, botany later. He was an active and loyal member of a small group of High School and University students associated for several years as 'The Young Naturalists' (see *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 54, January, March, and April, 1942, for articles by Dr. C. Judson Herrick). In 1879 he went to Great Falls, Montana, where he was for a time sheep herder, mail carrier along the Mussel Shell River in the Belt Mountains, and librarian in the Great Falls library. His growing interest in botany led to his collecting and preserving those species that especially appealed to him, and these he sent to Professor Eaton at Yale. It has been said that it was Professor Eaton who directed his attention to mosses which, as it turned out, became his life work. After several years collecting in Montana and spending part of 1898-1899 in the Yukon region in Alaska, he became connected with the New York Botanical Garden as Research Associate in Bryology, working under Dr. and Mrs. Britton. From this time on his major interest was the study of mosses. This period was from 1899 to 1940 when he retired from the Garden. During this time he made several extensive collecting trips in the interest of the Botanical Garden. In 1901-1902 he crossed the Andes in Bolivia with a party exploring for rubber and mines; from October, 1903, to August, 1905, he was in the Philippines, and in 1908 in Panamá. While mosses were the chief object, he collected at the same time many specimens of higher plants which were deposited in the Botanical Garden herbarium. A considerable number of these were new to science and several

bear his name. Collections of mosses that were sent to the Botanical Garden for identification from far and wide were referred to Williams for study and naming. In the course of this work he published some 55 papers, describing 165 new species and nine new genera. Most, if not all, of his papers were accompanied by original, carefully drawn plates illustrating the new species described. Most of them appeared in 'The Journal of the New York Botanical Garden but others were published in botanical magazines of this and other countries. Part 2 of Volume 15 of the 'North American Flora,' a bulky quarto, bears his name as author. He became a world-wide authority on mosses and in the writings of other bryologists, many species and one genus bear his name.

Throughout all these years Robert maintained his interest in birds, both at home and wherever he wandered. A copy of McGregor's "Philippine Birds," found among his effects, was evidence that he had a live interest in Philippine birds during his two years there. During his early years in Minneapolis he made a small collection of birdskins which are now in the study trays of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. Among them are specimens of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Sanderling, original records of these species for Minnesota. When he went to Montana in 1879, he transferred his interest in Minnesota birds to those of that state. In 'The Auk' for 1879 to 1890 there are ten notes and articles by Williams, all but the first about Montana birds. The first is a note recording the taking of the Gnatcatcher and Sanderling at Minneapolis. Later, during the years that he was with the Botanical Garden, he kept an eye out for the birds in the Garden and in the 'Journal' there are from time to time brief articles recording the movements and nesting of the birds that came under his observation. A complete bibliography of the ornithological writings of Williams would probably include at least 25 or 30 titles.

In the April, 1903, and September, 1908, numbers of 'The Journal of the Botanical Garden' are interesting illustrated articles, narrative in style, giving accounts of his experiences collecting in Bolivia and Panamá. On the Bolivian expedition he had a severe illness which almost cost him his life, but he says nothing about it in the story.

Robert, from his school days, had a quiet, retiring nature forming few social contacts, and as he grew older he became something of a recluse. He never married. After his return to Minneapolis in 1940, he lived a retired life and took little interest in passing events. But he was loyal to his old friends and fond of talking about the early days. His speech was concise and direct and confined strictly to the subject under discussion. Any attempt at small talk seemed only to confuse him. Up to almost the last he took a three-mile daily walk around one of the park lakes near his home. His end came quietly, and a niece, Miss Ruth Williams, with whom he was living, said that "he just seemed tired of living and laid down and died," an appropriate ending for a man of Robert's temperament.—THOMAS S. ROBERTS, *Minneapolis, Minn.*

A CORRECTION.—REV. FRANCIS HOPKINSON CRAIGHILL, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, elected in 1938, died in Rocky Mount, N. C., October 14, 1941. A notice of his death was prepared by Rev. John Gray for 'The Chat,' but through delay in the publication of that number, actually appeared in the September number, so that the obituary notice apparently was printed a month before the date of death. The notice in 'The Auk' for January, 1945, through an unfortunate error, appeared under the name Francis Hopkinson Smith, instead of Francis Hopkinson Craighill, but in the list of 'Deceased Members of the A. O. U.' in the April number, p. XIII, the name is given correctly.—T. S. PALMER.