

THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine of Western
Ornithology

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EDITORIALS

As a result of the San Francisco fire, following the earthquake of April 18, the California Academy of Sciences building with its contents was totally destroyed. This constitutes a tremendous loss to ornithology, for here was located the largest study collection of birds west of the great museums of the Atlantic cities. This collection, numbering in the neighborhood of 25,000 specimens, was unique in its extensive series of superbly prepared skins of sea-birds. The accumulation and study of these had long been the devoted aim of the Director of the Academy, Leverett M. Loomis. Another most deplorable feature of the disaster was the destruction of the valuable library, the ornithological portion of which contained many rare and expensive sets, such as complete files of the *Ibis* and *Journal fuer Ornithologie*. At the present writing (May 1) we have been unable to learn whether or not anything at all was saved. There is now practically no library on the Pacific coast suitable for extended research reference in ornithology. However, the Academy's endowment remains, together with the insurance on the burned buildings, so that we may confidently look for the institution to gradually regain its scientific importance.

As far as we now know (May 2) the Mailiard collections are safe, having been housed in San Francisco luckily just outside the limits reached by the fire. H. W. Carriger, however, lost nearly all his bird library; and M. S. Ray lost practically everything. Other Cooper Club members residing in San Francisco are yet to be heard from. Across the Bay, where the shock was less violent, and where fire did not add its destructiveness, little or no damage is reported. The collections of Taylor, Emerson and Cohen proved practically uninjured. While the buildings at Stanford University suffered severely, the natural history collections and libraries are quite safe. Nace's printing shop

in Santa Clara was partially wrecked, but its efficiency has been completely restored as attested to by the present issue of THE CONDOR.

Mr. Ruthven Deane informs us that to his knowledge there were but two copies of Audubon's "Birds of America," folio edition, west of the Missouri. These were in the Mechanics Library and Mark Hopkins Art Institute, San Francisco, and both were probably burned along with the horde of other rarities which can never be replaced.

Under date of April 21, Milton S. Ray writes us from San Francisco: "I am unable to account for the presence of various birds about the districts which escaped burning unless they are released cage-birds. This they probably are, as many are canaries. In the midst of the ruins in the Mission section a grove of cypress trees remained unscathed and notwithstanding the intense heat and sickening smoke, the English sparrows were carrying nesting material into the trees and working as assiduously as ever."

Attention is called to the fact that the Club-at-large is once more provided with a secretary. As elsewhere reported, the March Northern Division meeting duly elected to the Secretaryship Mr. Hubert O. Jenkins, of Stanford University. All communications intended for either the Northern Division or the Club-at-large should hereafter be addressed to him.

One (to us) very serious disadvantage of this combining and dividing of States is the confusion it makes in locating the published record-stations of birds. We hereby register our vote in favor of retaining the separate identity of Arizona and New Mexico!

Prof. F. E. L. Beal of the Department of Agriculture is in California again, for the purpose of continuing his study of the food of our birds. His headquarters will be at Haywards, and most of his work will be carried on in the orchards about the southern end of San Francisco Bay.

Mr. Frank S. Daggett in a recent letter to a Southern Division member remarked that there are now enough C. O. C. members in and close about Chicago to form another Division. This may not have been offered as a serious proposition; but nevertheless it strikes us as worthy of further consideration. It will be remembered that our Constitution was once amended so as to make it possible to form Chapters of the Club anywhere five or more members could meet together for bird-study. This seems to us quite apropos in the case of Chicago. We should be glad to see Mr. Daggett carry out his suggestion which could hardly help leading to successful results. The nucleus would consist of Deane, Daggett, Coale, Swarth, Woodruff, Gault, Knickerbocker and Price. There should be no dearth of interest with such an initial membership!

Altho it might seem a bit out of place in a purely ornithological magazine to venture

even so little beyond our narrow field, yet we cannot help remarking upon the pleasure to be derived from the study of mammals both in the field and museum. No specialist in any one group of animals can totally ignore every other group. The most eminent ornithologist will be the one who has a general knowledge of natural history to serve as a background for the study of his chosen specialty. A fair knowledge of insects, worms, molluscs, batrachians, reptiles and mammals will increase the accuracy of his study of the food-relations of birds, their distribution, and checks controlling their abundance. Mammals in particular need to be studied more in their bearing upon our avifaunas. Many birds-of-prey feed upon mammals, and many mammals feed upon birds. The chipmunk, as a nest-destroyer, has been accused of decimating the bird population of some parts of the country where a certain species abounds. In fact mammalogy and ornithology can be very comfortably studied together, with little interference, and with much added satisfaction. Heretofore students of mammals have had no text-book to refer to in identifying west coast species. This want is now to be met by our own fellow club-member, Mr. Frank Stephens, who is even better known as a mammalogist than as an ornithologist. As announced elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Stephens is the author of a forthcoming work on California mammals which will place this study on a basis for comparatively easy pursuit. Let us hear more in regard to the relations of the various members of the squirrel family to bird population.

We wish to call the attention of every bird student to the communication in this issue from Mr. P. B. Peabody. When a prospective author resorts to a published appeal for information concerning the subject he is elaborating, everyone becomes in a way responsible. It too often happens that a book, of a comprehensive nature such as Mr. Peabody is so earnestly striving to compile, might have been a little more up-to-date if only someone who had the needed information up his sleeve had "loosened up." More than likely the individual in question remarks after the book appears in print, "Ugh! I could have told him better than that." Of course an author is responsible himself for the searching out of, and proper selection from, all *published* writings. In order to make his knowledge available to all other workers (in other words, therefore, to shift the responsibility), it is incumbent upon every serious bird student to put whatever observations of value he has made, upon permanent record. And to afford a medium for recording these things is the *raison d'être* of such a magazine as THE CONDOR.

BOOK NOTICES

WILD WINGS. Adventures of a Camera Hunter Among the Larger Wild Birds of North America on Sea and Land. By HERBERT KNIGHTLY JOB. With an Introductory Letter by Theodore Roosevelt. Houghton Mifflin & Co., 8 vo., XXVIII+344 pages, 160 illustrations after photographs by the author. Price, \$3 net.

This is one of the most interesting portrayals of wild life that we have had the good fortune to read. Mr. Job is an enthusiastic naturalist and a skilled photographer as well, and with this equipment he has brought a generous slice of 'out-doors' between the two covers of his book. The illustrations are all good, and many are remarkable, having required a vast deal of patience and perseverance. Obviously it is impossible to give an adequate idea of a book of this character in a short notice, but the territory covered extends from Bird Rock in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to the Florida Keys, and some notion of the variety in subject matter may be gained from the chapter headings. Part I. Adventures in Florida Wilds, including: Cities of Brown Pelicans; Following Audubon among the Florida Keys; In the Cape Sable Wilderness; The Great Cuthbert Rookery; On Lone Bird Key. Part II. Other Wanderings South; Scavengers of the South; Virginia Bird-Homes of Beach and Marsh; The Egret, in Nature and in Fashion. Part III. The Sea! The Sea!—To Bird Rock in an Open Boat; Amid Northern Spruces and Sea-Girt Rocks; Off Chatham Bars. Part IV. The Elusive Shore-Birds—The Shore Patrol; Northward with the Shore-Bird Host; Shore-Bird Loiterers. Part V. Raptores and Forest Fastnesses—The New Sport of "Hawking"; Owl Secrets; Adventures with Great Horned Owls.—W. K. F.

TWO BIRD-LOVERS IN MEXICO. BY C. WILLIAM BEEBE. Illustrated with photographs from life taken by the author. Boston and New York. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 12 mo., XIII+408 pages, 106 half-tones. Price, \$3 net.

This attractive volume contains an account of a winter journey to Mexico, where three months were spent by Mr. and Mrs. Beebe, on what was virtually a camping trip. "We reached Vera Cruz on New Year's from which city we made three camping trips in the vicinity of the volcano of Colima, in the States of Jalisco and Colima; and returning via Vera Cruz, we left that port enroute for New York at Easter.

"The entire trip was so novel, so delightful, so absolutely devoid of unpleasant features, and on the whole so inexpensive, that it seemed to me that the knowledge of such an outing would tempt many lovers of Nature to this neighboring Republic. As an aid to such, Mrs. Beebe has added a chapter on 'How we did it.'"

The book is well calculated to tempt one to follow their example. It is written in a familiar, interesting style and contains many notes not only on birds but also on all the animals