

THE CONDOR

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of Western Ornithology

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EDITORIALS

Thru a series of unforeseen contingencies, the second and third parts of Finley's condor article will not appear until later in the year, tho both will surely be run in our present volume. The delay, however, will be beneficial in the long run; for it will enable Mr. Finley to further perfect the material on hand, and also to gather additional data from outside sources.

It will be remembered that Mr. Lee Chambers, of Santa Monica, has for several years been accumulating information respecting the California condor. A surprisingly large number of records have been authenticated, and the literature of the subject thoroly overhauled. Now that Mr. Finley has so good a foundation, Mr. Chambers has very generously insisted upon turning all the results of his own work over to Finley, to be incorporated with the latter's "Life History." This will all appear in due time in "THE CONDOR."

The California Academy of Science's expedition to the Galapagos Archipelago, which left San Francisco June 28, 1905, returned safely to the home port the first of December last. All members of the party were in good health, tho glad to get home. Mr. R. H. Beck, who headed the expedition, considers the collections obtained by far the most extensive and complete of any that have ever been taken from that group of islands. These large quantities of material, in almost every branch of natural history, await the work of specialists before the actual scientific results become fully known.

The most important local record in our present issue is the new one for the English sparrow, which has at last made its appearance in Los Angeles County. The approach of this invader along the railroad lines from the north has been slow but steady, and its ultimate establishment here has been expected for years. It will now be interesting to see how the native linnet fares in competition. Yet it will probably be several years before the pestiferous interloper begins to affect our native bird fauna.

Mr. R. C. McGregor calls our attention to the following rich sample of popular ornithology taken from a no less substantial current periodical than the *Century Magazine* (March, 1906, page 788).

"In the feathered world of the West there is an analogous case of the utilization of the cactus-plant for the protection of progeny. Singularly enough, though in a dry country, it is a wading bird, one of the varieties of the curlew, with a long bill and long slender legs, which, like the antelope, uses the cactus as a home and defense for her nest and young.

"She will carry sticks in her long bill and drop them in position as nearly as possible in the center of a cactus-patch while hovering over it. When she has accumulated enough, alighting on the heap, she arranges her nest, wherein she lays four beautiful turquoise-colored eggs about as large as those of a domestic hen, and then comes and goes from her nest at will, knowing that it cannot be molested."

McGregor asks, "Did you ever hear of such a stunt by a curlew? Does any curlew lay 'beautiful turquoise-colored eggs'?" We would like to know, too!

Mr. W. L. Finley was recently appointed lecturer for the National Association of Audubon Societies. He lectured in Baltimore, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, St. Paul and other cities in the interests of the Audubon work. During the spring he will make a lecture tour thru Oregon and Washington for the National Association.

We are in receipt of a cordial letter from Dr. D'Evelyn, the new president of the Cooper Ornithological Club. He enters upon his new duties enthusiastically, and we trust that a new era of activity will be inaugurated in the Northern Division of the Club, where interest in birds has been rather feeble since the "quake." Dr. D'Evelyn hints of certain plans for the spread of the Club's influence, especially along the lines of bird protection and educational work.

The Fish Commission steamer *Albatross* returned to San Francisco, December 11, after a very successful scientific cruise along the North Pacific coast of Asia. Dr. C. H. Gilbert, of Stanford University, was in charge of the work, and Professor J. O. Snyder was one member of the party. Marine forms of life were the chief objects of interest, and vast quantities of specimens were properly preserved. The fishes received most attention, and these will be worked

up by the ichthyologists at Stanford. As far as we are able to learn, the ornithological results of the expedition were relatively unimportant.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

The present reviewer cannot remember to have ever read a book more profitable, and at the same time entertaining, than BEEBE'S "THE BIRD".¹ The brief title at first glance seems to lack sufficient definiteness as to the real nature of the subject-matter. The book has nothing to do with systematic ornithology: species are mentioned merely incidentally; but a multitude of subjects related to evolution and adaptation are dealt with. After all, as we think it over, the book *does* treat of *the bird*, inclusively and broadly. Yet one must have read and studied the whole book to comprehend its scope.

Our first pleasure was in simply "looking at the pictures." Every one of the 371 illustrations are significant *per se* of some fact of bird structure or habit: One does not have to read the context to gain at least some suggestion of what the pictures are meant to show. There is every indication that Mr. Beebe has spent plenty of time in securing the most instructive photos for the bringing out of each desired point.

And the text is as good as the pictures. The style is non-technical, but not too "popular" in most places. Here and there, there is a shade too much of literary ornateness, which to our minds does not strictly harmonize with the scientific treatment of a subject. But this is so inconsequential a criticism, that we feel almost ashamed to have ventured it.

The following are a few of the subjects discussed: The ancestors of birds; growth and structure of feathers; framework of a bird; organs of nutrition (tongues, crops, gizzards); food and feeding-habits of various birds; breath of a bird; senses; wing-structure and flight; theories of coloration; the bird within the egg.

Beebe's "The Bird" is an extraordinary book, and we advise our readers to get this one above any other work on birds of the same size.—J. G.

"THE PROTECTION OF OUR NATIVE BIRDS" is the title of a pamphlet² by Professor MONTGOMERY of the University of Texas. In the publication and distribution of such carefully

and convincingly drawn up papers as this, can the educational centers of each state do much to spread the cause of bird protection. As Professor Montgomery suggests, it is thru the *schools* that the knowledge of the value of birds can be emphasized at large. Nature courses in the lower grades are most productive of widespread good, it has seemed to us. The *economic* value of bird-life is what will appeal, by way of the school children, to the adults of the community.

The present paper presents the subject strongly, and cannot fail to have its good effect. So good a service has thus been done by Professor Montgomery that we are quite ready to pardon his extreme attitude in respect to collectors. It is too bad, tho, that people have to go to extremes!—J. G.

In a profound essay on "THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES," Professor C. O. WHITMAN briefly reviews³ the progress of our knowledge of the methods of species-formation, and contributes to their further understanding. While agreeing that the majority of animals may be subject to ordinary or fluctuating variation (that is, variation uniformly in all directions), and that evolution in such cases seems to be solely directed by natural selection (or survival of the fittest), Professor Whitman maintains that further, in some cases at least, there is *orthogenesis* as a result of continuous asymmetrical or "definite" variation.

Orthogenesis, as the present reviewer understands it, is the evolution of a linear series of descendants in a definite direction (as regards some one or more specific characters), irrespective of the Darwinian essential of fitness or unfitness and resulting persistence or elimination of individuals. This would conveniently account for the very beginnings of certain structures, now clearly adaptive, but of which we cannot imagine a series of *useful* rudimentary stages.

Professor Whitman has been a strong advocate of experimental evolution and is himself at work along that line. For the past ten years he has had under constant observation a succession of generations of the common pigeon (*Columba livia*). Supplementing these, he makes use of specimens of all available wild species of pigeons and doves. He has selected, for reasons of convenience, as characters for observation, the color-patterns shown on the outer surface (coverts) of the wing. The endeavor was to find a case where he could trace the history of one particular specific character. An ideal case seemed to be provided by the

1 The Bird | Its Form and Function | By | C. William Beebe | Curator [etc., 4 lines] | with over three hundred and seventy illustrations | chiefly photographed from life | by the author | [vignette] | New York | Henry Holt and Company | 1906; pp. xii—496, 1 plate, 371 text figures.

2 The Protection of Our Native Birds | By | Thos. H. Montgomery, Jr. | Professor of Zoology [Bulletin of the University of Texas No. 79, Scientific Series No. 8; Oct. 1, 1906; pages 30].

3 The Problem of the Origin of Species | By Charles Otis Whitman [Reprinted from "Congress of Arts and Sciences, Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904", Vol. V; pages 18 (repacked?)].