

body are not wanted, and are charged \$25 per year." (Signed) W. L. Pinney, Fish and Game Commissioner of Arizona Territory.

We don't propose to make these editorial columns a table of contents of the issue, as is often the custom of magazines. Yet we cannot help calling particular attention to the last pelican photo with Finley's article, page 41 of this number. Aren't the purely artistic merits of this picture to say the least exceptional?

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stephens and Mr. Joseph Dixon are leaving the first of April for a season's collecting in southeastern Alaska. Their work is in the interests of a private party, and will pertain mostly to mammals. Yet birds will not be altogether neglected.

An effort was recently made in Oregon by the fruit growers in the southern part of the State to amend the Model Bird Law to such an extent that the legislation for song birds was practically annulled. They introduced a bill in the House to the effect that farmers, gardeners and orchardists could shoot any bird providing that it was considered detrimental to crops. The bill passed the House and also the Senate on February 21 by a narrow margin. But thru the Oregon Audubon Society, such a sentiment was raised in favor of the birds that Governor Chamberlain vetoed the bill on February 25.

The Portland, Oregon, Public Library has been presented by Mrs. W. S. Ladd with an original set of the four-volume elephant folio edition of Audubon. It is thought this is now the only complete set on the Pacific Coast. The set was purchased somewhere in the East in 1879 by Mr. William Ladd for \$1800. Mr. W. L. Finley has examined the work and finds these volumes of the "Birds of America" to belong to the same edition as those in the Library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, as described by Stone in *The Auk* for July, 1906.

Mr. C. B. Linton, of the Southern Division has been visiting in turn this spring the various islands along the southern California coast. He reports many new records for San Clemente and San Nicolas.

We are informed that it is now the intention of the California Academy of Sciences to locate their new building, to cost about \$250,000, in Golden Gate Park. This will be a vast improvement over their former location in the dark and grimy business section of San Francisco.

Mr. Bradford Torrey of Boston is again spending the spring in southern California watching ouzels, solitaires and condors thru his 12-power Busch binocular.

The Cooper Club, both Divisions, has voted an increase in the subscription price of THE CONDOR. This was a warranted move for several reasons. The dollar rate did not meet the cost of publication. Even at the increased

rate, \$1.50 per year, ours is yet the lowest priced of ornithological magazines. We believe that our subscribers appreciate the value received in THE CONDOR, and will continue their support, the result of which will be an extension in its size and number of illustrations. Whether or not our expectations are well founded remains to be proven. It must be remembered, however, that THE CONDOR receives considerable of its support from the dues of the Cooper Club (which includes subscription), and these remain unchanged.

COMMUNICATIONS

SLAUGHTER OF BLUE JAYS

Editor THE CONDOR:

A double-column display header in a Sacramento paper lately published announced, "Killing of Jays, the Destroyers of Quail Nests." This charge conjoined with the detailed reading matter, which was written with an intensity which curdled one's blood, foretold that "there will be an *awful slaughter of blue jays during the early spring months.*" Subjoined was a subscription list wherein was donated various sums from \$1.50 to \$10, concluding with a very noble determination on the part of the individual who distinguished himself last year by killing the greatest number of jays "to strain every muscle and exercise every effort to uphold his reputation and win first prize this year."

Mr. Editor, rightly or wrongly the reading of this sent a creepy reflex thru my sympathetic, and I wondered if this slaughter was either intelligent or justifiable.

I remember as a boy in my native land the bad name the common magpie (*Pica caudata*) had as a destroyer of chickens, and a robber of nests. Indeed I even recollect seeing "sucked eggs," but never did I know of a pre-arranged slaughter, and yet the farmers of that region were careful of their own interests. But to return to the 'Jays', I wrote up to the district where the campaign was being organized. I received some information which convinced me that in some cases at least, the execution was wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart. One of the subscribers honestly admits that "he had never given the matter of blue jays any personal attention, but was guided solely by the report of others." The heavy donation was from a dealer in sporting goods—a sportsman, and of course a close observer of nature! A third gentleman, who has the local reputation of being the best authority on birds said "that the jay is no good, he destroys eggs all the time," and that he "had actually seen a jay robbing a dove's nest, and flying away with the egg in his beak." The sportsman with the ambition for perennial premiership "is a farmer, an old gentleman" who had one thousand scalps to his credit for last season. One could, Mr. Editor, be a Christian and yet wish that the right hand of the 'old gentleman' might at least soon lose its cunning, and not

over strain its senility to win a "jay" reputation. My informant tells that the 'sport last season produced 6,000 counted scalps; many more unrecorded. The sport is stimulated by prizes—sportsman's sundries, guns, etc., etc., paid for out of the subscribed pool.

I was told "the first prize is a \$50 gun and the farmer's boy" (who probably learns ornithology, by suggestion) is "after that gun," and "gives the jay no rest." Thus the story runs, and the moral which our friends advance is "that last season was the best for quail for a long time." I do not desire to sound one note of censure upon these determined men; but if the main object is to save quail eggs, one naturally asks what advantageth it the quail, whether he dies in embryo, or a few months later falls a "sacrifice" to his kindly protector, who had shielded him "in egg," and watched over him in infancy, so that he might "pot" him in early maturity!

I presume the species of jays which are killed are the ordinary Pacific Coast species, *Aphelocoma californica* and *Cyanocitta stelleri*, species which have been investigated by our esteemed member, Prof. F. E. L. Beal of the Biological Survey, and others, and the evidence obtained permits the conclusion, that while the blue jay is a marauder and guilty in degree, it is not so to the extent which those who know it only by "its bad name" discredit the unfortunate bird.

Prof. Beal tells us that in the stomachs of 141 California jays 35 per cent of the contents for the year consisted of animal matter and 65 per cent vegetable; traces of egg shells were found only in twenty-one stomachs; in another series of 300 stomachs only three contained egg shells and two, only, bones of birds."

I think it would be well within the scope of the C. O. C. if each member, and there are members in almost all parts of the State, would take the trouble of investigating scientifically the habits and foods of the blue jays as they were found in that especial district, and forwarding the results of such observations, to the secretary of the club. It is the duty of such a club as the C. O. C. to be able to state exactly the economic value or otherwise of any prominent species of bird. It does seem a questionable proceeding to slaughter in a single season over 8,000 individuals of a species, if there is no more valid reason for so doing than that the sportsman may form a nursery-preserve of some other species, whose economic value as an agricultural asset may actually be of a much lower value.

I have every confidence that when it can be shown that the blue jay, or any other black-listed species, has qualities which entitle it to an intelligent consideration, and which in equity mitigate its evil reputation, it will be found that the good sense of the sportsman, not

forgetting the apt kindness of the "farmer's boy" will find him a less ardent competitor for "the prize-gun" and still less ambitious to attain a doubtful heroism in the "awful slaughter" of a species "during the early spring months."

I submit this matter to the members of the C. O. C.—ask them to graciously aid in obtaining facts—and indeed in all cases of appeal to be an ever ready and competent court of equity in all matters pertaining to our local ornithology.

Respectfully yours,
FREDERICK W. D'EVELYN,
President, Cooper Ornithological Club.

APROPOS OF EGG-COLLECTING

Editor THE CONDOR:

Some of those who read your pages have been both interested and amused at the trend of the controversies in the matter of egg-collecting. There is a broad streak of humor in the matter-of-factness with which the opponents of egg-collecting take themselves so seriously that their position would, if universally admitted, utterly obliterate every other domain of bird study than their own from the curricula of that great University in which all thoughtful men are students. But biological investigation is not all of knowledge; even as the *esthetik* which weaves its own poesy about the devious pursuits of the ultra-collector is not all of life. Those who fume and fulminate against the egg-collector would seem utterly to overlook the educative element in collecting.

To illustrate: Correspondence in which, with aims largely personal, he has been engaged during the past two years, has brought the writer into contact with a large number of bird students. Many of these have been known, at least by name, to some of us for many years. As we remember them twenty years ago, they were just egg-collectors—nothing else. Today they are students of bird life. No more exact investigators than a few of them are to be found in all the ranks of the American Ornithologists' Union. If, then, the acquiring of scientific data be a *summum bonum*, surely the early and erratic and impulsive career of every one of these "bird-men" has been richly worth the while.

A generation ago there was many a boy who spent the bulk of his spare time in turning somersaults or in standing on his head. Thus he learned the ins and the outs of the wrong-side-ups and the right-side-downs of things. And today, with the putting away of childish things, these same amusing acrobats are building rail-roads, digging canals and tunnels—are strenuously "getting after" the sundry *octopi* that have so wondrously thriven of late in the troubled seas of American commerce.

If, then, the faddists who teach "nature-