

ing a self-addressed, stamped envelope, will receive a copy of these instructions gratis.

A Cooper Club member of long standing, Edward Bruce Richards, died at Grass Valley, California, September 30, 1928. He was a mining man, born in Nevada City, May 21, 1872. Since retiring from active business, he had spent more and more of his time in the pursuit of bird study, and in so doing had gathered together a considerable collection of birds. Based on these, and upon his extensive local field experience, Richards published in *THE CONDOR*, xxvi, 1924, pp. 98-104, "A List of the Land Birds of the Grass Valley District, California", enumerating 114 species and subspecies. Shortly before his death, Mr. Richards presented his collection of Nevada County birds to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California.

A book we have just read, of high literary as well as considerable natural history merit, is John C. Phillips's "A Sportsman's Scrapbook" (Houghton Mifflin, 1928). The illustrations, too, are excellent, the originals (by A. L. Ripley) nearly all of them done in what appears to have been lithographer's pencil, the half-tone results being soft and more like lithographs than reproductions from the usual types of drawings. Doctor Phillips inducts his reader skillfully into full sympathy with his own high type of sportsman's point of view, which lacks much of the prejudice and taboo characterizing the ordinary run of "fish and game" sportsmen. Geese, ducks and grouse, and trout, are dealt with in a pleasing, personal-remembrance style.—J. G.

The Marquis of Tavistock, in a communication to the *Ibis* for October, 1928 (pp. 817-818), sounds a warning that deserves to be repeated and emphasized. Speaking of plumage variability in broods of Pennant Parakeets that were raised in his aviaries, and in one brood in particular, his concluding statement is as follows: "Those Australian field naturalists who labour under the delusion that the *Platycerci* do not attain adult plumage with the first complete moult would probably, if shown the skins of my family of *P. elegans*, assign a different age, and possibly a different year, to each of them." Ornithological literature is full

of descriptions of plumage stages of the sort he justly criticizes based not upon observed differences in birds of known age, but purely upon the assumption that certain plumages are representative of certain ages, the very plumage thus described being then adduced as proof of the assumption. The fallibility of the latter method has been demonstrated several times, as in these parrots, and, from wild birds, in the Bohemian Waxwing. In dealing with captive birds, suggestive as observed variations may be, there is always the chance that behavior is not just the same as it would be in the wild, and this criticism would not arise in studies based upon banded birds. Here is a field in which bird banders can do good service by having the scope of their observations include more than manner of occurrence of some species at least, of the birds passing through their hands. Colonies of gulls, for example, thus studied might yield some valuable results.—H. S. SWARTH.

A PRIZE IN WESTERN ORNITHOLOGY

The Editors of *THE CONDOR* announce the Mailliard Prize of One Hundred Dollars, to be awarded in January, 1930, for the most worthy contribution to western ornithology to be submitted within the year 1929. Award of this honor will be subject to the following conditions.

The contribution is to consist of a written report (of not less than 1500 words), in language that is explicit but not necessarily technical, upon some phase of bird study carried on in western North America. Manuscript should be in the office of *THE CONDOR* not later than December 1, 1929, and it should be in a form suitable for publication in this magazine. Judgment will be rendered on the basis of originality in choice and treatment of the subject, thoroughness, accuracy of detail as it reflects accurate observation, and the significance of the results for general natural history.

Competition for this award is open to any student of ornithology in North America west of the Mississippi, whose membership in the Cooper Ornithological Club has begun not later than December 1, 1929; but excepting faculty members and students in the University of California, and members of the staffs of other institutions where ornithological work is already a prominent feature. It is the intention of the donor of this Prize, Mr.

Joseph Mailliard, of San Francisco, an Honorary Member of the Cooper Ornithological Club, thus to encourage persons who do not have ready access to large libraries or to extensive collections of specimens, to make independent, intensive studies of living birds.

Persons who expect to submit manuscripts should write for directions as to mechanical preparation of the papers to either of the Editors of *THE CONDOR*, J. Grinnell or J. M. Linsdale, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, California.

THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION AT CHARLESTON, S. C., NOVEMBER 20-22, 1928.—The selection of Charleston for the A. O. U. meeting of 1928 proved to be a decidedly happy choice, for the charms of southern hospitality, climate, and "atmosphere" combined to produce most felicitous results. Some doubts may have been felt as to a large attendance amid untried surroundings, but the Union has become bolder of late years in following new paths and the turn-out of members was all that could have been desired. Nearly everyone came, and nearly everyone brought his wife!

The California representatives (Mailliard, Miller and Swarth) were first to arrive, Sunday morning, followed at once by the Washington contingent, twenty-nine in number. Members of the local committee (Messrs. Williams, Sprunt, Sass and Simons) were on hand to greet arrivals at the hotel, and on Sunday afternoon they and their friends took everyone out for a drive through the city and in the surrounding country. Many additional arrivals toward evening added to the success of the informal "get-together" that from then on was in progress at all times not occupied by the formal sessions.

The meetings were held mostly in the Charleston Museum, where Miss Bragg, the Director, and her several assistants, were thoughtful and considerate hosts. The length of the program necessitated double sessions on two mornings, the technical papers being given in a smaller room while those of more general interest were delivered in the large auditorium. The "memorial session," Tuesday evening, was most appropriately held in St. John's Lutheran Church, memorable as the church where Bachman once was pastor. The session devoted to motion pictures was held in the Charleston High

School, on the site of Bachman's home.

An appreciated feature of the meeting was the abundant opportunity for everyone to see something of the surrounding country. Besides the hastily organized drives on Sunday, there was on Tuesday afternoon a motor trip fifteen or more miles from town, covering some of the collecting grounds of Catesby, Audubon and Garden, and taking in also the famous and beautiful Middleton Gardens. Then, the whole of Friday was devoted to a field trip by boats to Dewees Island, where members were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Huyler at their attractive winter home. The western members of the party, at least, will long remember the sail over the placid waters of the bay and along the winding channels, and the walk through the unfamiliar woods of Dewees Island.

The annual dinner, with perhaps 200 present, was held in Hibernian Hall, in a huge, high-ceiled room with the chandeliers hung with ropes of smilax. The dinner was followed by a feature probably unique in the annals of the Union, an entertainment by a Charleston amateur musical organization, "The Society for the Preservation of Spirituals." The negro religious songs thus delivered were applauded by an appreciative audience, who could realize the historical and sentimental value attached to the preservation of this most charming and characteristic music.

Preliminary to the public sessions were the several business meetings, occupying Monday afternoon and lasting far into the night. One Fellow was elected, Arthur T. Wayne, of Mount Pleasant, on the outskirts of Charleston, the outstanding ornithologist of the southern states at the present time. It was a pleasing circumstance that permitted his election at this meeting, but it was a disappointment to the membership that Mr. Wayne was too ill to attend the sessions, or to meet anyone. Another local man, Alexander Sprunt, Jr., of the Charleston Museum, was elected Member. One new name was added to the Council, that of P. A. Taverner.

At this Meeting there were to be seen the familiar faces of most of those on whom the Union has depended for guidance during many years past. There was one, however, whose absence was keenly felt, Dr. Jonathan Dwight, prevented from attending by illness, and absent from an A. O. U. meeting for the first