of this species in Massachusetts in winter will be found in Bull. Nuttall Orn. Club, VIII, 149.

The winter of 1889-90 was on the whole a very mild one, with but little snow, yet marked by great and sudden changes of temperature. The mercury stood at 5° F. or thereabouts on several nights, and on the 22d of February it fell to —7°. It is worthy of note that the Yellowthroat, Nashville Warbler and Blue Heron above-mentioned were all birds born during the preceding summer. It seems reasonable to suppose that many young birds annually get left behind when the autumnal migration occurs. In such an event they might survive the following winter if it should prove to be a mild one, while the stoutest heart among them would probably succumb to the rigors of a genuine 'old-fashioned' New England winter.—WALTER FAXON, *Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

Two Notes from South Carolina.—I shot a male *Dendroica cærulescens* on December 6, 1889, at Pinopolis, a few miles from Charleston. The weather was very cold at the time, and was the coldest of the winter of 1889-90, up to March. This species ordinarily passes through here as late as the middle of October.

On May 9, 1890, Mr. W. F. Colcock brought me an adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak. It was shot in Saltkehatchie Swamp which is only a few miles from tide-water. A few days later another male was seen. This is the first record for lower South Carolina. It is only found in the mountainous portions of the State.—ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Yemassee, S. C.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Query in regard to the Least Tern.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Dear Sirs:—I wish to inquire about a peculiarity in the nesting habits of the Least Terns or, as they are commonly known here, the 'Little Sea Gulls.' They generally arrive here about May 6 (this year, May 13) to breed on the sand bars of the Mississippi River. If the water is off the bars they begin laying about the middle of June, and they continue to lay until August, for I have found their eggs as late as the middle of the latter month. I have generally found three or four, and often five, eggs in a nest. The nest is only a little hollow scooped out in the sand. In July, when most of them are laying and have eggs, if you walk over the bars they fly close to you and almost strike you with their wings, making a loud noise as if they were terribly annoyed by your presence and wished to drive you away.

Upon examining the eggs you will find perhaps half of them have a spot of water on them. How did it get there? Is it put there by the parent bird, and if so, for what purpose? I have questioned persons who were,

I thought, ornithologists of some authority, but got no satisfactory answers. One even wrote to me that perhaps it was dew formed on the eggs. Just think of dew, at midday, on the sand blazing under a semi-tropical sun, with not a particle of shade except when the sky is overcast! Cannot any of your readers throw some light on the subject?

The young are just the color of the sand. I have followed their trails through the sand for fifty or a hundred yards and found the little downy fellows with not a feather on them. How they escape the foxes, raccoons, and opossums, besides the numerous Hawks, is more than I can tell.

Yours respectfully,

GIDEON MABBETT.

Rodney, Mississippi.

NOTES AND NEWS.

WILLIAM KITCHEN PARKER, F. R. S., an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union died suddenly July 3, 1890, at Cardiff, Wales, at the age of 67 years. He was born at Dogsthorpe, near Peterborough. While still a youth he was apprenticed to a chemist. Later he studied medicine, settling at Pimlico in 1849. In natural history he was at first deeply interested in botany, and later on in the study of the Foraminiferæ, to which his earlier papers relate. In 1865 he began the publication of a series of valuable papers on the morphology of the skull in Vertebrates, beginning with the Ostrich, and including the Parrot, the Common Fowl, and representatives of the principal types of Vertebrates, from mammals to fishes. In 1868 he brought out his well-known wonderful, 'Monograph on the Structure and Development of the Shoulder-girdle and Sternum in the Vertebrata.' He was also the author of the article on the Anatomy of Birds in the last edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' His contributions to ornithology are mainly anatomical, and include among others the following: 'On the Osteology of *Balæniceps rex*,' 1860-62; On the Osteology of the Genera *Pterocles*, *Syrrhaptes*, *Hemipodius*, and *Tinamus*,' 1862; 'On the Systematic Position of the Crested Screamer (*Palamedea chavaria*),' 1863-64; 'On the Skeleton of the *Archæopteryx* and on the relation of the Bird to the Reptile,' 1864; 'On the Osteology of the Kagu (*Rhinochetus jubatus*),' 1864; 'On the Structure and Development of the Skull in the Ostrich Tribe,' 1866; 'On the Osteology of Gallinaceous Birds and Tinamous,' 1866; 'On Ægithognathous Birds,' 1873-76; 'On the Development of the Wing in the Common Fowl,' 1888; 'On the Systematic Position of the Swifts,' 1889. In 1877 he summarized the results of his previous studies in a volume on 'The Morphology of the Skull.' He also left unpublished memoirs on the Morphology of the Anatidæ and the Alcidæ. In 1874 he was appointed Hunterian Professor of Comparative Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1865, and for a time was Pres-