

might be distant, as I did not know the country, this being my first trip through it.

The extreme drouth of the past season is destroying great numbers of cattle and horses in many parts of California and food for Vultures is therefore abundant. Bitter experience has increased the natural wariness of the species and now it is by a fortunate accident if the collector obtains a specimen. Unless an epidemic or some other disaster overtakes the species its extermination will not occur in our day.—F. STEPHENS, *Witch Creek, San Diego Co., Cal.*

Clark's Nutcracker in Eastern Missouri.—On the 15th of November last (1894) I had occasion to drop into the establishment of a prominent taxidermist, who handed me a bird to identify which proved a fine adult specimen of *Picicorvus columbianus*, Clark's Nutcracker, an extreme western species, never known to have been seen in this locality before. The specimen in question had been killed about four miles east of this city (Kansas City, Mo.) by a party while hunting in what is known as Big Blue bottom, formerly a heavily timbered district, though considerably thinned out now. The taxidermist was not positive as to the date of capture, but thought it was Oct. 28, or thereabout. He asked the gentleman who brought the specimen to him if any others like it were observed and he stated none others had been seen. Unfortunately he did not take the gentleman's name and address, so I had no opportunity of interviewing him personally. Prof. Dixon, the taxidermist, says he will mount this specimen, and probably send it to the State University at Columbia, Mo.

There was also brought into this same establishment a splendid specimen of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctala acadica*), killed by flying against a plate glass window on Broadway Avenue, this city, and picked up by a passer-by and brought in to be mounted. This is the second specimen of this diminutive species of the Owl family which had come into his hands from this immediate locality.—JOHN A. BRYANT, *1221 Olive St., Kansas City, Mo.*

Chats reared by Song Sparrows.—On June 8, 1894, while collecting about three miles north of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co., N. Y., I found a nest of the Chat (*Icteria virens*) containing a set of four eggs. They were packed away with some others I had collected and taken home, but on attempting to blow one I found that they were heavily incubated, the embryo being so large that it would have been impossible to remove it. In a small hedge near the house at which I was staying was a nest of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza fasciata*) containing a set of four very pretty eggs, but I did not like to rob the bird, as it was quite tame, and I had watched the building of the nest with a good deal of interest; so I thought of a scheme by which I could obtain the set and still give Melos-

piza a brood to rear. I removed the eggs (which were perfectly fresh) and substituted those of *Icteria*, which had been without warmth for several hours; but, contrary to my expectations, they all hatched by the 13th, and the young birds were tenderly cared for by their foster mother until they left the nest about three weeks later. The young Chats grew so rapidly that they completely filled the nest in a short time, and it was a curious sight to see the mother feeding or endeavoring to cover with her wings her three charges, who were fully as large as she.

This experiment proves that *Melospiza fasciata* will rear a brood of totally different and much larger birds, whose eggs hatched a long time before her own would have. And also that *Icteria virens* will live on the same food as *Melospiza*, for we can hardly suppose *Melospiza* to have been intelligent enough to collect the same food for the young birds as their own mother would have done. To me it is an interesting subject and I intend to try other similar experiments next spring. — CURTIS C. YOUNG, *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

A Swallow Roost near Portland, Conn. — On the opposite side of the Connecticut River from Portland are what are locally known as the 'Little River' meadows. These meadows contain several hundred acres and through them flows Sebeth (Little) River which empties into the Connecticut. Along the banks of this 'little river' and its tributaries, water oats (*Zizania aquatica*) grow in abundance, giving food and shelter to the Rail, Marsh Wrens, and many other birds. These oats are the roosting place of thousands of Swallows, the birds spending the night clinging to the upright reeds, one above another. As a boy it was often my practice to fire a gun after dark in order to start the Swallows up and then witness their tribulation when trying again to find a suitable place for the night. This habit of disturbing the poor birds has not deserted me in later years.

The Swallows commence to congregate in these marshes early in August, and a small number may be found there the last week in October; the bulk, however, are seen from the middle of August until late in September. During the day they leave the meadows and only a few are seen in the vicinity, but at half past four in the afternoon they begin to appear from all directions, the flight ceasing about 6 P. M. My house is situated on high ground some two miles east of the marsh, and the flight of these birds over my premises, and toward this meadow, is so regular (from 4.30 to 6 o'clock) each afternoon, that a watch is hardly necessary to tell the time of day. Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) predominate at this roost, but many Barn Swallows (*Chelidon erythrogaster*) are seen, and a few Cliff and Bank Swallows (*Petrochelidon lunifrons* and *Clivicola riparia*). Occasionally a Martin (*Progne subis*) joins the multitude of other Swallows flying about the marsh. — JNO. H. SAGE, *Portland, Conn.*