

A Protest.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—Let me add my protest against the present collection-rage, especially the egg form. The persons given over to this mischievous passion see their own side of the matter and often, no doubt, feel innocent. There is, of course, *something* to study, however little, comparatively, even in a boughten egg shell. I emphasize the *boughten* because, the wholesale robbing of rookeries being barter, specimens gotten in this way lack even the power which an egg of one's own collecting has to call back the vision of the nest and its environment.

Any breeding colony, like that of the Brown Pelicans at Pelican Island is especially tempting to these individuals, and especially at their mercy. And while truer students are delighting in their occasional visits to such a place, and living on the memory; and whereas such a colony within reach is a priceless treasure for the world of students of the Life History of Birds, any one of these less intelligent persons may at one swoop, like a monkey in a flower garden, very nearly sweep the whole colony from the face of the earth; and at the best, for so proportionately poor a reason that his act stands black against all the beautiful good he has marred.

There should be no confounding of the horde of ignorant persons in whom the *getting-passion* is their only claim to the name of naturalist, with the *student* who must have a large series; and advice to amateurs to *get all the specimens they can* will prove pernicious in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred.

I think it very necessary to publish widely in all bird-magazines such names as that of L. W. Brownell of Nyack who has given us in 'The Osprey' his own account of his looting of Pelican Island, and bringing away one hundred and twenty-five *sets* of eggs,—about a quarter of the entire number.

Yours very truly,

ABBOTT H. THAYER.

Scarborough, N. Y.

Mar. 23, 1899.