

stated; 'Winter Birds,' by Lynds Jones (Scioto and Pike Counties, Ohio, and Bristol, Conn.); 'An Addition to the Birds of Middle Southern Ohio,' (*Larus philadelphia*) by W. F. Henninger; 'A New Year Horizon for All,' by the Editor; 'A New Bird for Ohio, Red-legged Duck (*Anas obscura rubripes*),' by W. F. Henninger; and ten pages of editorial matter, 'general notes,' reviews, and correspondence.

In the December number the editor briefly reviews the history of the nine volumes of 'The Wilson Bulletin,' forming the 'New Series,' in which he says: "From a small beginning our official organ has come to fill a place in the study of our birds which we may well point to with pride. While the development has been slow it has been sure." This is indeed a modest claim, in view of the many valuable papers that in recent years have resulted from the work of various members of the 'Wilson Ornithological Chapter,' and which have found a medium of publication in 'The Wilson Bulletin'; for all of which great credit is due to the efforts and example of the editor, Professor Lynds Jones of Oberlin.—J. A. A.

**Jacobs's 'The Story of a Martin Colony.'**<sup>1</sup>—This is a very interesting and suggestive account of the growth and prosperity of a Purple Martin colony under the author's protecting care during a period of seven years—1896–1902—at Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. In 1896 a twenty-room bird house was erected by the author in his grounds, but to his disappointment only one pair of birds at first availed themselves of these ample accommodations, but later these were joined by four other pairs, of which "the males were all birds of the previous year." But through disturbances by English Sparrows and other mishaps only eleven young birds reached maturity. The next year ten pairs took possession and 35 young birds "were successfully brought out." The third year additional house room was provided by the erection of a new 34-room dormitory. This was occupied by fourteen nesting pairs, and thirteen of the males being birds of the previous year led Mr. Jacobs to believe that all were from the house first erected. The number of young reaching maturity this season was between 90 and 100, several mishaps having interfered with the prosperity of the colony. The wonderful increase in three years prompted the erection of further quarters in 1899, and the colony continued to increase. In 1901 there were 67 pairs of nesting birds, and in 1902 the annual census of the colony, taken May 28, gave the following results: "Rooms occupied, 72; containing eggs, 50; containing both eggs and young, 2; nests undergoing construction, 20; total number of eggs and young on this date, 245."

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<sup>1</sup> Gleanings | No. II. | The Story of a | Martin Colony. | Illustrated. | — | Observations on a Colony | of Purple Martins. | (Progne Subis.) | — | By J. Warren Jacobs. | — | Waynesburg, Pa., | Independent Book and Job Office. | 1903.—8vo, pp. 24, and 3 half-tone plates. Price, 35 cents.

Mr. Jacobs's brochure contains three half-tone plates, illustrating the houses with their colonies of breeding birds, and the general narrative of the founding and increase of the colony is followed by sections entitled: 'Return from the South,' giving the dates of spring arrivals from 1891 to 1902; 'Nest Building, Deposition and Number of Eggs, and Incubation,' and relates the manner of nest building, the number of eggs to the set, and the length of the period of incubation. The record shows that a total of 1150 eggs were laid during the seven years, and that 850 young reached maturity. 'The Growing Young and the Parents' Care' is the title of a most interesting and instructive chapter, and is followed by: 'Something about Their Food'; 'Their Enemies, Causes of Death, etc.'; 'Off to the South'; 'A Chapter on a Cabinet Series of Their Eggs'; and 'On the Construction of Houses.' The author says: "I have robbed my pets but I do not wear their feathers in my hat!" During the seven years of his fostering care he confesses to having taken eleven sets of eggs for study, of which one had been deserted, and the others were soon followed by the deposition of second sets. The sets vary in number from 3 to 7 eggs to the set, and the size of the eggs is largest in the smallest set, but the smallest average size does not always coincide with the largest number of eggs to the set.

In short, Mr. Jacobs's history of his Martin colony is a valuable contribution to ornithology, as regards both the economic and natural history phases of the subject.—J. A. A.

**Pycraft on 'The Significance of the Condition of Young Birds at Birth.'**<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Pycraft believes that too much stress has been laid by systematists on the widely diverse conditions the young of different groups of birds present at birth, as regards their helplessness or otherwise, and whether clothed or more or less naked; and further claims that the significance of these conditions has been misunderstood. "The real explanation of the matter," he says, "seems rather to turn upon a question of expediency, designed, so to speak, to reduce infant mortality." He claims to present facts "strong enough, on the one hand, to refute the older views, and on the other, to justify the theory, firstly, that birds were originally arboreal and their young nidifugous; secondly, that nidicolous habits and helplessness of young birds are specialized adaptations to an arboreal or gregarious mode of life; and, thirdly, that the young of gallinaceous birds form a link in the chain of evolution of nidifugous habits. The free finger tip and arrested development of the outer quill-feathers point to a prior arboreal habit, whilst the accelerated development of the inner quill-feathers indicates an adaptation to enable the young to escape

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<sup>1</sup>The Significance of the Condition of the Young at Birth. By W. P. Pycraft, A. L. S., F. Z. S. Popular Science Monthly, Vol. LXII, Dec. 1902, pp. 108-116.