

subspecies; the question is whether a bird name should be an attempt to express the facts and theories of evolution, or whether a bird name should be a convenient handle to forms exhibiting no intergradation, the species of to-day. In trying to manufacture a nomenclature for birds of remote ages, past and future, are we not putting an impediment in the way of the study of existing birds?

What then shall we call the Mocking Bird of the writer of the old tract on Carolina, the *Turdus minor cinereo-albus non maculatus* of Catesby, the *Turdus polyglottos* of Linnæus, the *Mimus polyglottus* of Boie, the *Mimus polyglottus*, var. *caudatus* of Coues, the *Mimus polyglottos polyglottos*, *Mimus polyglottos leucopterus* of Mearns? Call them all *Mimus polyglottos*, giving in the general description of the species geographic variation along with the other variations.<sup>1</sup>

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## THE CALIFORNIA MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

BY J. A. ALLEN.

IN THE April number of 'The Auk' (XX, pp. 245, 246) reference was made to a proposed special meeting of the A. O. U. to be held in California some time in May of the present year. Details were given of the itinerary for the outward trip and of the probable cost of transportation for the round trip. The proposition met with such cordial approval that two Pullman cars were required for the accommodation of the members and their friends who desired to avail themselves of so favorable an opportunity to visit the Pacific coast. Chicago was the point of rendezvous for the depart-

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<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, I have read Dr. Allen's observations on 'Species, Varieties, and Geographical Races' in the 'Mammals and Winter Birds of East Florida' (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., Vol. II, no. 3, April, 1871, pp. 242-249). So far have we drifted, that the republication of these observations, written more than thirty years ago, would be a timely elucidation of the present questions in ornithological nomenclature.

ture, the A. O. U. special cars being attached to a train of the Santa Fé Railway leaving that city at 10.30 P. M., May 3; and San Francisco was reached on the afternoon of May 14. The eleven days thus spent were exceedingly profitable to the travelers, the journey being broken at several points for the purpose of making side trips to places of special interest, as the old historic town of Santa Fé in New Mexico, where a day was spent; at Adamana, in eastern Arizona, in the Little Colorado Desert, a day was given to the wonderful 'Petrified Forests'; two days were allotted to a side trip from Williams, Arizona, to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado; a morning at Hesperia, Arizona, gave opportunity for an examination of the famous yucca trees in the Mohave Desert; an afternoon at Riverside, California, was a delightful experience, and a day's stop at Los Angeles was improved by many of the party to make a trip to the summit of Mount Lowe.

Very few of the members of the party had previously visited the country traversed, and everything was new and intensely interesting; and, fortunately, among the few to whom the country was not new were experts who through previous extended field work in the region were able to give information respecting its topographic features and the peculiarities of its flora and fauna.

At Chicago an informal reception was given to the A. O. U. members by Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven Deane, at whose house they thus had opportunity to meet many Chicago ornithologists and naturalists; a reception was tendered them at Los Angeles by the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club. In San Francisco they received a most cordial welcome from the members of the Cooper Ornithological Club and the California Academy of Sciences, the Museum of the Academy forming the general headquarters, and in its lecture hall was held the two days' joint session of the A. O. U. and the Cooper Club.

The purpose of holding a meeting of the A. O. U. at some point on the Pacific coast was, primarily, to bring together as many as possible of the working ornithologists of the East and the West; it was therefore especially opportune that the first special meeting of the A. O. U. and the Tenth Anniversary meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club could be held in joint session.

The meeting was called to order at 11 A. M., May 15, Dr. C.

Hart Merriam, President of the A. O. U., in the chair, and Mr. Charles R. Keyes, Secretary of the Cooper Club, acting as secretary. Mr. Charles A. Keeler gave a brief address of welcome in behalf of the Cooper Club, and an appropriate response was made by the President of the A. O. U. An afternoon and an evening session followed, and the meeting reconvened at 10.15 A. M., May 16, adjourning, *sine die*, at 12.30 P. M., of the same day.

Thirteen eastern members of the A. O. U., and thirty-three members of the Cooper Club were in attendance at the various meetings, and about twenty visitors.

The following papers were read :

1. Origin and Distribution of the Chestnut-backed Chickadees. Joseph Grinnell.
- \* 2. The Cassin Auklet. Howard Robertson.
3. Recognition of Geographic Variation in Nomenclature. Leverett Mills Loomis.
- \* 4. Notes on the Fresno District. J. M. Miller.
- \* 5. Do Valley Quail use Sentinels? Jno. J. Williams.
6. An Island Community, or Bird-Life on Laysan; illustrated with lantern slides. Walter K. Fisher.
7. Notes on the Birds of Chili. Joseph Mailliard.
8. Call Notes of the Bush-tit. Joseph Grinnell.
9. General Habits of the Prairie Falcon. Donald A. Cohen.
10. Oregon Birds caught with a Camera; illustrated with lantern slides. Wm. L. Finley.
11. The Bird Islands of Our Atlantic Coast; illustrated with lantern slides. Frank M. Chapman.
12. Remarks on the A. O. U. Journey across the Continent. Louis A. Fuertes.
13. The Farallon Islands; illustrated with lantern slides. W. Otto Emerson.

Resolutions of thanks were adopted on the part of the A. O. U. members for the courtesies extended to them by the members of the Cooper Club and the Academy of Sciences, and to the A. O. U. Committee of Arrangements for the California trip.

The eastern A. O. U. members present were C. Hart Merriam, President A. O. U.; J. A. Allen, Louis B. Bishop, H. C. Bumpus, Frank M. Chapman, John Lewis Childs, Mrs. E. B. Davenport, J. Dwight, Jr., J. H. Fleming, L. A. Fuertes, W. W. Maires, T. S. Palmer, Otto Widmann.

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\* Read by title at the close of the session.

In the afternoon following adjournment a trip was made to the Leland Stanford University at Palo Alto, in response to an invitation from its President, Dr. Jordan. The following day Mount Tamalpais was ascended by rail, the descent being made by the Ross Cañon trail, for the purpose of seeing its fine redwoods, and getting into close touch with some of the forms of vegetation and bird life characteristic of this portion of California.

On arrival in San Francisco the A. O. U. party practically disbanded, as it was planned to do from the first, the various members independently making their plans for the return journey and for such side trips as their several interests dictated. The Yosemite Valley and Monterey were points subsequently visited by many of the members, while the Farallons, and various points on the coast, in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys, and in the high Sierras attracted others, some six weeks or more being available for field work or sightseeing before the expiration of the time allotted for the trip. Messrs. Chapman, Dwight, Bishop, and Fuertes planned somewhat extended collecting trips, and were greatly aided in their plans for work by the kindness of various numbers of the Cooper Club.

The trip is one to be long remembered by those who were so fortunate as to be numbered among the congenial party of forty-four persons who left Chicago on the evening of May 3, on the A. O. U. excursion to California. The lay members, so to speak, will return with greatly enlarged views of the country and its resources and scenic wonders; the strictly ornithological contingent will have acquired a clearer conception of the varied physical conditions of the vast region between the Mississippi River and the Pacific coast, and of its diversified faunal and floral areas, and the wonderfully varied climatic conditions included within the boundaries of the State of California; and last but not least in value are the acquaintances the eastern members were enabled to form with the leading workers in Pacific coast ornithology, whom for the most part they had previously known only through correspondence or their published writings. The Cooper Club has most thoroughly redeemed its promise (see editorial in 'The Condor' for July, 1902) to give "a cordial welcome and a generous reception" to the A. O. U. in the event of its being able to arrange a meeting in California.