

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## Where the Skeletons of American Birds may be Studied.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—It is not my intention in the present communication to furnish a list of either public or private institutions in this country where may be found, for the use of students of the subject, a collection of skeletons of birds, much less to supply the names of those possessing such material and who are willing to place it at the disposal of workers and authors in this department of comparative anatomy. Not that such a list would not be of use and value to ornithotomists generally were it published, but, so far as my knowledge carries me, the necessary information for it has, up to the present time, never been prepared. On the other hand it is hoped that it may prove to be of some service to students of the anatomy of birds to know where they may examine and study a representative collection of skeletons of the Class, all of which have been figured, described and published in various scientific periodicals and found in all the larger libraries everywhere. Reference is here made to the material which composed what was up to a few months ago my own private collection.

Through donation this is now the property of the New York State Museum at Albany, where it is being classified and otherwise cared for, in order to render it available to such students having occasion to utilize it in their work. It is in charge of Doctor John M. Clarke, Director of the Science Division of the New York State Education Department at the State Hall in Albany, who doubtless will be glad to furnish any information in regard to it. So far as American species go, this is probably the largest collection of the kind in this country, and the specimens all being unmounted and described, they present data and the opportunity for study and comparison, not as yet found elsewhere in this country. Either perfect skeletons or parts of skeletons here represent nearly all the main genera of the birds of the United States. Moreover, the majority of them are *types*, thus rendering them especially valuable for scientific reference. Perhaps I may be pardoned for alluding here to the many cherished associations that are, for me, forever bound up in this collection. It took many years to bring it together, and in the work I was not only assisted by members of my immediate family, now gone, but by many others whose names we find among those on the last few pages of the autumn issue of 'The Auk.'

It is a satisfaction to know that this collection of skeletons is now in such good keeping, and from *Aechmophorus* to *Sialia* I trust they will do duty for many a year yet to come.

In closing, it may be of interest to my friends to know that there is now passing through the press a special Bulletin, under the direction of the

Education Department at Albany, which is devoted to four of my osteological memoirs on birds. They cover the *Accipitres*, the *Anseres*, the *Gallina*, and a special one on the *Coccyges*. Some two hundred heretofore unpublished figures illustrate the text.

Very faithfully yours,

R. W. SHUFELDT.

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

CHARLES ALDRICH, a Fellow and one of the Founders of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at Boone, Iowa, March 8, 1908, at the age of 80 years. In accordance with a standing order of the Union respecting deceased Fellows, a memorial of his life and work will be presented at the next stated meeting of the Union, and published later in 'The Auk'.

EDWARD SEYMOUR WOODRUFF, an Associate Member of the A. O. U., died of typhoid fever at his home in New York city on January 15, 1909. He was the youngest son of Charles Hornblower and Catherine Sanford Woodruff, and was born in New York City on December 23, 1876. He was graduated from the Academical Department of Yale University with the class of '99, afterwards, for a year, pursued a special course in biology at Johns Hopkins University, and later entered the School of Forestry at Yale from which he obtained the degree of Master of Forestry with high honors in 1907. Shortly afterward he received an appointment as State Forester of New York, which post he filled with great ability up to the time of his death.

Much of Mr. Woodruff's early life was spent at his country home in Litchfield, Conn., and here while wandering in woods and fields he developed a taste for natural history in several of its branches, and cultivated that love of prying into Nature's secrets which is the greatest asset of every true naturalist. He was always deeply interested in ornithology, and leaves behind him a fine collection of birds as a monument of industry and devotion to this science; while the excellent notes and papers which he published gave promise of still more valuable ones to follow. Among them may be cited, as of exceptional value, the carefully prepared list published in 'The Auk' for April, 1908, with title 'A Preliminary List of the Birds of Shannon and Carter Counties, Missouri,' and 'The Ruffed Grouse — A Study of the Causes of its Scarcity in 1907,' published by the Forest, Fish and Game Commission of New York, in 1908. Both are models of their kind, the former dealing with the scientific side of systematic ornithology, the latter covering one of its economic aspects.