

CORRESPONDENCE.**A Plea for the Evidence.**

Editor of 'The Auk':

It is undeniable that the value of any conclusion depends primarily upon the nature and extent of the evidence from which it is drawn. This is no less true in science than in law. The counsel who asserted the innocence of his client but withheld the grounds for his belief would doubtless lose his case. The physicist or biologist who advanced an original theory but refused to present the data on which it was based would not be taken seriously.

Why then should not the systematic zoölogist support his opinion by presenting the evidence on which it rests? "A" describes a new race and in a line or two tells us it is paler or darker, larger or smaller than some other, gives one set of measurements, names a type, and a form is born to live forever in nomenclature.

The describer does not tell us whether he had more than one specimen of the proposed new bird, he makes no mention of comparison with topotypical examples of allied races, in short, he withholds his evidence. In this day of fine "splitting," when the ascribed differences are often within the range of individual variation, the importance of adding to the diagnosis of a new form, a list of the "Specimens Examined" is too obvious to require comment. Many systematists indeed follow this admirable method but there is a regrettably large number who do not employ it. It is to them I address this plea to follow a procedure which will increase the value of their labors, do justice to themselves, and add credit to the technique of descriptive zoölogy.

Lest I be accused of undue discrimination I am sending this letter to 'The Ibis' as well as to 'The Auk.'

Yours sincerely,

FRANK M. CHAPMAN.

*American Museum of
Natural History New York City,
July 6, 1925.*

" Out of Print "

Editor of 'The Auk':

A disappointing thing to the new generation is to know that many of the supremely good and valuable classics in ornithological literature will probably never be available to them. If the writer were able to do so, he would consider going into the publishing business for the sole purpose of specializing in the republishing of out of print works, which should be continually available to newcomers in ornithology. Could not some publishing house make a financial success of a republishing of the text of Audubon in a good form, when bird students and others interested number many times more now than formerly, as is indicated by the

surprisingly large amount of literature on birds and other nature subjects which is sold at present; and when a reading public shows its interest by listing Beebe's 'Galapagos,' Thompson's 'Outline of Science,' and other similar works, among its leading sellers in non-fiction? One wonders whether a canvass among the subscribers to the ornithological magazines, and also among others, to get an approximate idea of the demand for it, might not tempt some publisher to undertake it.

It is also disappointing to learn that excellent works of very recent date are no longer available. An outstanding example of this is a well known and much desired National Museum Bulletin on the diving birds, published just so recently as 1919; not to mention many others just as desirable, published before and even since. This condition is made still more acute by learning of certain works, of which only a few copies were printed; or even that certain works were printed chiefly for private distribution.

It seems very desirable that editions of valuable works, which so soon become as scarce as Heath Hens and Whooping Cranes, or even Wild Pigeons, should be larger than they often are, and that periodical re-issues should be made to meet new demands for them.

The same may be said of those mines of information, the ornithological magazines, complete files of which are no longer obtainable for newcomers in this field of interest. Would that somehow it were possible to have a reprinting of these.

If promise of financial success in such matters does not attract private enterprise, many hearts would be glad, I am sure, to hear sometime that some of our institutions for the dissemination of knowledge, or our governments, would include these masterpieces in their printing programs.

Yours Truly

CLIFFORD MARBURGER.

Denver, Pennsylvania.

NOTES AND NEWS.

JOHN HALL SAGE, Ex-president, Secretary for 28 years, and Life Fellow of the Union elected at the first meeting, died in the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, August 16, 1925. He was spending his vacation at a camp in the Maine woods when he was taken suddenly ill and was brought to Boston where he underwent an operation for kidney trouble and a few days later passed away. At the time of his death he was in his 79th year, having been born in Portland, Connecticut, April 20, 1847.

He was the son of Charles Henry and Eliza Hall Sage. His education was received in the common and high schools of Portland and Bridgeport, Conn., and later the honorary degree of Master of Science was conferred on him by Trinity College, Hartford. At the age of 26 he entered the service of the First National Bank of Portland with which he was associated during the rest of his life. He filled various positions serving as