

OBITUARIES.

ROBERT HENRY WOLCOTT, Chairman of the Department of Zoology at the University of Nebraska, who was elected an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1901 and a Member in 1903, died at Lincoln, Nebraska, January 23, 1934.

Dr. Wolcott was born at Alton, Illinois, October 11, 1868, son of Robert N. and Agnes (Swain) Wolcott. Most of his early life was spent at Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was graduated from the High School in 1885, following which he continued his education at the University of Michigan, where he received the B. L. degree in 1890, the B.S. degree in 1892, and the M.D. degree in 1893. Though qualified to practice either law or medicine, Dr. Wolcott chose to follow the career of a biologist, and was immediately engaged, during the summers of 1893 and 1894, on a survey of the fish supply of Michigan waters. In 1894 he received a call to continue his graduate studies and to act as the only assistant to Dr. H. B. Ward in the Department of Zoology at the University of Nebraska, where in 1895 he received the M.A. degree and was made an instructor in the Zoology Department. Three years later (1898) he was promoted to be an Adjunct Professor and four years subsequently (1902) he became an Assistant Professor and the Demonstrator in Anatomy, which was followed in 1903 by a promotion to be Associate Professor of Zoology, and in 1905 to a full Professorship in Anatomy. It was Dr. Wolcott, largely, who developed the pre-medical work in the University of Nebraska, then under the administration of the Zoology Department. In 1909, he was made Chairman of the Department of Zoology and acting Dean of the College of Medicine. Following the location of the College of Medicine of the University at Omaha, Dr. Wolcott (in 1915) severed official connection with that College, and assumed the more restricted duties of Professor of Zoology and Chairman of the Department. This was his status at the time of his death, after forty years of continuous service at the University.

A student of all living things, especially animals, Dr. Wolcott maintained throughout his life a special interest in birds and insects. His first publications (1884 to 1899) dealt largely with the nesting of different Michigan birds observed in the vicinity of Grand Rapids. After his removal to Nebraska, he continued the publication of bird notes, first in 1899 in a short paper in the *Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club*, on the birds noted in Nebraska in the fall and winter of 1898-99, and later in the *Proceedings of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union*. In 1899, Dr. Wolcott was the leader in organizing, first a Nebraska Ornithological Club of Lincoln, and later, with the coöperation of Professors Lawrence Bruner and W. D. Hunter of the Department of Entomology, and Mr. I. S. Trostler then of Omaha, the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. In this latter organization, Dr. Wolcott served as Secretary for five years, and on his retirement from that office was elected President of the organization, to which office he subsequently was re-elected three times.

Dr. Wolcott was a great lover of the out-of-doors, and an expert field naturalist. Probably as the result of his early work in Michigan on fresh-water biology, Dr. Wolcott developed a special interest in the American water mites, and through his researches carried on at Nebraska, beginning about 1898, he became the generally regarded American authority on this group. He had a great interest also in butterflies and beetles, especially in the family of tiger-beetles, in which he made a detailed study of the color variations. During the last few years of his life, he devoted a great deal of labor to a textbook in beginning zoology, which was published under the title *Animal Biology* only a short time before the onset of his fatal illness. The

ornithological contributions of Dr. Wolcott consist chiefly of a considerable number of short articles and scattered notes on bird observations, published in the principal ornithological periodicals. He was one of the co-authors of the "Preliminary Review of the Birds of Nebraska," published in 1904, and author of "An Analysis of Nebraska's Bird Fauna," published in 1909, his two most important contributions to ornithology.—M. H. SWENK.

THOMAS SPENCER, elected an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1928, died at the age of 51 at Studley Park, Tobago, B. W. I., February 11, 1930, and was buried the following day in Hope Chapel Cemetery, The Hope, Tobago. For the following information regarding his activities, thanks are due to E. G. Wortley, Director of Agriculture of Trinidad.

Spencer was born at Birmingham, England, Nov. 20, 1878, and his early education from 1886 to 1892 was received at the Vicarage Road School, Astor Manor, and later at the Birmingham Municipal School of Art. By profession he was an artist and draughtsman. He held "certificates in Free Hand Drawing, Drawing from Cast, Model and Shading from Models; Machine and Geometrical Drawing; Painting and Design; Perspective and Drawing from the Antique." In his early years he was employed by the firm of E. C. Dutton of Birmingham, Engravers and Illustrators, but in 1904 he embarked in business for himself in wood engraving, electrotyping and general illustrating. During the Great War he served for two years and a half in the tool room of the Sidderley Deasy Air Craft Co. of Coventry. After the War he joined the firm of Gordon Grant and Co. as an estate manager in Trinidad, B. W. I. From October 1, 1922 to the close of 1928 he served as Instructor in Drawing and Handicraft in the Government Training College and during the last two years of his life he resided on the Brothersfield Estate on the island of Tobago.

According to F. W. Urich, Entomologist of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, "Spencer was a good field ornithologist. His principal occupation was the painting of birds in water colors and he was particularly good at rendering the specimens in their true colors. He left a good many water color paintings of Trinidad and Tobago birds." This collection has been acquired by Sir Charles Belcher, Chief Justice and author of the 'Birds of Trinidad and Tobago.'—T. S. P.