

from a letter given him by his friend, Captain Billings, which he is careful to quote and acknowledge in the second of the letters (Schorger, p. 474).

The first of Mather's letters to contain a record of the pigeons remains unpublished. The original, addressed to Dr. Woodward, Nov. 19, 1712, is in the Letter-Book of the Royal Society; but the Massachusetts Historical Society has a complete copy—the "Gay MS., fols. 39-47." It was used by Professor Kittredge, but apparently was overlooked by Dr. Schorger, so that, to complete the publication in the Auk of all that Mather wrote about the Passenger Pigeon, the following excerpt from the first letter is needed. After some comments on our Humming-Birds, weighing "but eight or Ten grains," and still referring to them, the letter continues:—

"They are never seen in the Winter, but are some of the *Season-birds*, whereof I now propose to invite you unto an entertainment. And so are o^r wild Pigeons whereof Thousands of Millions visit us at their appointed *Season*. The flights have been so great, that for four, or five miles together, they have merely darkened the Horizon. They have been Commonly sold in y^e markt-place, ready pluck'd, & drawn, for two-pence or three-pence a dozen; enough to make a meal for half a dozen temperate people. We take y^m either wth *Gun* or with *Nett*, it is hardly credible, how many at a time. Their Numbers are of late years much diminished; especially on this occasion. When y^e time of their Departure has been at hand, about *Michaelmas*, they have in horrible storms miss'd their way; & thousands of Millions have perished in the sea, where o^r Ships have afterward sailed thro' them lying on y^e Surface of y^e Water, for some Leagues together. 'Tis odd, that tho' we have such Vast Numbers of them, yett in *Virginia*, a Colony a Little to the Southward of us, I am told they are somewhat of a Rarity; which will a little fortify a Conjecture about the *Season-birds*, which I am now going to tender you."

The long letter then speculates on possible "*Christalline*, or *Semi-pellucid Bodies*, between the *Earth* and the *Moon*," to which migratory birds may resort; or else, as stated in the second letter, the pigeons "must have a Retreat in South-west parts of *America*, whereof we are not yett advised." The Royal Society was doubtless "entertained." Dr. Woodward asked for, and received, more information about the pigeons since, as Professor Kittredge observes, "no historical student would think of denying that Cotton Mather was one of the best informed Americans of his time in scientific matters."—FREDERIC T. LEWIS, *Harvard Medical School, Boston*.

Ornithological corrections.—The series of corrections in the July, 1944, Auk by Mr. W. L. McAtee sets a fine precedent, but it hardly seems necessary to wait scores of years. From time to time we all run across errors in our own published writings. I shall here correct those in my own which seem to change meanings. In only one of these papers did I see proof.

1934. Auk, 51: 304, line 18. The numeral 2 should be the letter *a*.

1935. Trans. 21st American Game Conf.: 34. The printer put in "casual" where I wrote "causal". There is a lot of difference between the two.

1939. Research Studies State Col. Wash., 7: 163-198. Page 170, number 15a should be *tree swallow*; page 172, number 4d should be *black-throated blue warbler*. In a revision of a rough draft some years earlier, a comparison between the Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals was dropped. In some way, the scientific name of the former became attached to the latter. Obviously it should be *Querquedula discors* on page 174.

1942. Passenger Pigeon, 4: 78-79. I do not know how the American Oyster-catcher got into Table 3. It is not in my data.—LEONARD WING, *State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington*.