

support, moral and practical, in this line of its work, and we of the Cooper Club are in line to help in the securing of more rigid enforcement of existing game and bird laws.

We are pleased to inform Cooper Club members that the entire cost of this large and varied issue of *THE CONDOR* is borne by Mr. John Lewis Childs, whose interest in the Club's welfare needs no further proof. Such a large and generous donation means that we are offering our readers in the present Volume far more than their combined dues and subscriptions would alone provide. We take this opportunity of heartily thanking Mr. Childs.

We have heard that Mr. R. H. Beck is contemplating yet another expedition to the Galapagos Archipelago.

The new Secretary of the Northern Division, Mr. Roswell S. Wheeler, was one of the original group of Cooper Club "boys" who used to hold animated bird meetings at Barlow's or Taylor's thirteen years ago. Those were jolly good times, and there's no reason why we shouldn't enjoy similar occasions now — only, perhaps, we are growing old and our enthusiasm wanes.

Let it be henceforth known, that *THE CONDOR* management will no longer print "For Sale" ads., relating to birds or eggs. We have been informed that it is contrary to the intent of the law to in any way make a commercial commodity out of such specimens, whether taken under permit or not.

Dr. William Legrange Ralph, the well-known oologist, died at Washington, D. C., on July 8th, at the age of 57.

Dr. Ralph was born at Holland Patent, New York, in 1851. He was graduated in medicine in 1879 from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, and afterwards engaged in the practice of his profession in Utica, where he had resided since early childhood; but delicate health obliged him to abandon a medical career, and he turned to the less exacting study of natural history. From early boyhood he had cultivated a taste for this subject, and he now began in earnest the formation of a local collection of birds, eggs, and nests. In the study of the local avifauna he was associated with Mr. Egbert Bagg, and the researches of the two students resulted in the publication of an "Annotated List of the Birds of Oneida County, New York"<sup>1</sup> followed shortly by some "Additional Notes on the Birds of Oneida County, New York."<sup>2</sup>

It was to the subject of oology, however, that Dr. Ralph chiefly directed his attention, and

after nearly completing his collection of local species he spent much time in searching for desiderata, even employing men by the year in the Adirondacks and in Florida to hunt for certain rarities. In this way, and by direct purchase, he added many choice specimens to his collection, and secured valuable information on the nesting habits of various rare species.

Dr. Ralph early made the acquaintance of Major Bendire, and the two men soon became close friends. After the Major assumed charge of the National Museum collection of eggs, he usually spent his vacation in Utica, while Dr. Ralph always stopped at Washington on his annual visits to Florida. When the "Life Histories" were undertaken, he contributed many notes for them, and the two published volumes teem with items from his pen. In 1892 he sent the first installment of his collection to Washington, as a gift to the National Museum. This generous act was followed year after year by other donations, numbering in all about 10,000 specimens, almost all of which were in faultless condition, and accompanied by ample data.

In 1897, Dr. Ralph was chosen to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Major Bendire, and in 1901 his title was changed from Custodian to Curator. In the same year it was announced that he would continue the work on "Life Histories," and he began at once to accumulate data for the third volume (to include the families in the A. O. U. "Check-List" from the Fringillidæ to the Cerebidæ); but owing to the precarious state of his health the volume was incomplete at the time of his death.

Dr. Ralph was a genial, mild-mannered man, of a uniformly cheerful and gentle disposition, one whose loss will be keenly felt by a large circle of friends and associates.—C. W. R.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### THE POSSESSIVE FORM IN VERNACULAR NOMENCLATURE

Editors of *THE CONDOR*:

Mr. Dawson's suggestion that either the possessive or adjectival form is right in such cases, for example, as *Centronyx bairdii*, seems open to serious question. The sparrow was not given to Mr. Baird. On the contrary, the name of Baird was given to the sparrow. Then why on earth should it be Baird's Sparrow? In many such cases the man whose name is given to the bird has never even seen the species, has had nothing to do with its discovery and was not even aware of the use of his name until the publication of the description. To illustrate,

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Oneida Hist. Soc., III, 1886, pp. 101-147.

<sup>2</sup> Auk, VII, 1890, pp. 229-232.