

favorable moment. This will be a personal matter and we'll get to it all in good time. After that you will be a booster. All your friends know that you are interested in birds. May they not also know that you are interested in the success of the California bird-book? We are going to succeed, of course; but success will mean so much more to us if we can all share it. Thank you.

W. LEON DAWSON

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PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

MILLER ON FOSSIL BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA AND OREGON.—Mr. Loye Holmes Miller is continuing his studies upon prehistoric birds, remains of which are becoming available in remarkable quantity through the work of the University of California department of Paleontology under the direction of Dr. John C. Merriam. Since our last notice of Miller's work (CONDOR XII, January 1910, p. 48) three more papers have appeared. In each case the well-chosen title gives a clear idea of the contents of the paper.

The first article deals with the "Wading Birds from the Quarternary Asphalt Beds of Rancho la Brea" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. V, August 5, 1910, pp. 439-448, figs. 1-8). Contrary to expectation wading birds are found to be but poorly represented in the Rancho la Brea beds, located near Los Angeles. But five species have so far been found, and of these only seventeen individuals are represented. Fourteen of these individuals are referred to the subfamily *Ciconiinae*, which is at present foreign to the region. *Ciconia maltha*, not distantly related to the White Stork of the Old World, is described as new. The other member of the subfamily is the Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*). Of the cranes (*Gruidae*) both *Grus canadensis*, and a newly described species related to it, *Grus minor*, were found; and of the herons (*Ardeidae*) only *Ardea herodias*.

In the next paper Miller treats of "the Condor-like Vultures of Rancho la Brea" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. VI, November 28, 1910, pp. 1-19, figs. 1 a and 1 b to 5 a and 5 b). The abundance of the remains of these huge scavenging birds is accounted for by the author on the ground that the Quarternary mammalian fauna in this region was abundant, remains of both herbivorous and carnivorous species of large size being numerous in the same beds. The asphalt furnished a trap for these beasts, and the carcasses of these in turn lured the vultures to their doom. The keen senses of the birds, both of sight and of smell, were doubtless effective at great distances, and thus toll was taken from a large area. The relatively large number of vulturine representatives might thus be in part explained. Only one of the four species to which the material is referred exists at the present time; this is the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*),

represented by a series of fourteen fossil tarsi. *Sarcorhamphus clarki* is described as new and most nearly related to the Andean Condor. Quite different from either of the above are *Cathartornis gracilis* and *Pleistogyps rex*, both genus and species being newly named in each case. These are of larger size than either of the existing condors; in fact *Pleistogyps*, because of its great size and the fact that it is represented only by tarsi, while *Teratornis* was described from skull and pectoral girdle, arouses the suspicion that it might, indeed, be identified with *Teratornis*. The author arrives at his decision to the contrary by carefully weighing the various considerations concerned with such a problem. The reader is left impressed with the conclusiveness of the author's argument. All the way through, the present paper is notable for detailed, osteological study and cautious but imaginative inferential reasoning.

The third paper contributes "Additions to the Avifauna of the Pleistocene Deposits at Fossil Lake, Oregon" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. VI, February 4, 1911, pp. 79-87, figs. 1-3). This deposit had been previously pretty thoroughly exploited by Shufeldt. In Miller's paper, three forms are recorded, not mentioned by Shufeldt, and one of these, *Echmophorus lucasi*, is described as new. A summarized list of all the species of the avifauna is given. This otherwise excellent paper is marred by numerous mis-spelled words, a feature doubtless deplored by all concerned with the publication of the paper, but due to a fortuitous lapse of the pen or mind to which no one appears to be wholly immune.—J. G.

NOTES ON THE PASSENGER PIGEON, by W. J. MCGEE (Science, n. s., vol. xxxii, no. 835, December 30, 1910, pp. 958-964).

It is not at all probable that ornithologists will regard seriously the statement of Mr. McGee that the Passenger Pigeon is still to be found in abundance in southern Arizona, in the extremely arid desert region between Nogales and Yuma. Had the pigeon sought the seclusion of the desert for a respite from incessant persecution, it is at least probable that some one of the numerous collectors that have explored the region would have secured a specimen at some time. Such has not been the case, nor did the naturalists accompanying the United States Mexican Boundary Survey report their occurrence in that region, though in 1894 they visited the exact spot where Mr. McGee claims to have seen the birds (Tinajas Altas). As he was quite evidently unable to distinguish between the California and Gambel Quails we are probably safe in assuming that he mistook some other species for the Passenger Pigeon.—H. S. S.

TRACY ON THE "SIGNIFICANCE OF WHITE MARKINGS IN BIRDS OF THE ORDER PASSERI-