

A Prospectus

In 1894 the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club published an annotated list of the "Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey." Since the compilation of this list was begun the Club has spent nearly twenty years in further study of the bird life of this region and the possibility of publishing another and far more comprehensive work on the same subject has recently been broached at the meetings. The dominant thought in these suggestions has been that while the facts gleaned by the Club on distribution, abundance, migration, nidification etc., should be carefully compiled and welded into as complete an account as possible of the bird as we know it in the Delaware Valley, there should be something more—some sketch that will bring out the individuality of each bird and which will touch what Dr. Trotter has termed the "background of Ornithology," that illusive thing that is now the love of nature, now some familiar association, running through all our bird study and making of Ornithology something more than a mere branch of science.

The compilation of the body of the work being largely a matter of clerical routine has been left to the last, and attention has centered during the past year upon the preparation of these sketches or biographies of the more familiar birds. The ten men best able to do the work were invited to select ten or fifteen "favorite" species, for from choice, or circumstances, or both a man is always better acquainted with some species than others.

The results were interesting. The selections were made absolutely independently and so widely did preference vary that no less than sixty-seven species were selected and duplications were much fewer than had been anticipated. Only one bird was chosen by as many as five writers—the Cardinal. Seven species were chosen by four men—the Wood Thrush, Catbird, Chat, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Purple Grackle, and

Turkey Vulture—and eight species by three. It was therefore easy to make an allotment of ten and five species respectively to the writers and yet give to each one species that he had, for the most part, himself selected. At several meetings the members have been entertained by the reading of certain of these sketches and the variety of treatment has been striking. On the following pages we present with Dr. Weygandt's permission his sketch of the Wood Thrush, as an illustration of the plan we have in view.—ED.