

August, 1895, and exhibits the autumnal plumage nearly completed. All these individuals were collected either in the northeastern part of the District of Columbia, or in the adjacent parts of southern Maryland. Of the seven red males in the series taken at random from April 18, 1896, to July 15, only one of them shows the full and completed plumage, and that the one shot on the first-mentioned date. All of the others present more or less green in the wings and tail, and one with a greenish patch on the throat. A specimen, an old male, shot on the 15th of July, 1896, has both the plumage of the entire body and tail red, while the secondaries and primaries of the wings are in the process of the moult,—the new feathers likewise coming in *red*,—the same applying to the wing-coverts. This tends to prove, in so far at least as this particular specimen is concerned, that in the male of this species in the autumnal moult they reassume the red plumage. Another specimen, which I take to be a young male of the first spring, and shot on May 14, 1897, has the body plumage red, with red and green wings, but the tail exactly half red and half green,—the green feathers on the left half of the tail being half a centimeter shorter than the red ones. All these feathers are new, with the exception of one of the green ones, and it is found next to the outermost one of that side. Now the first plumage taken on by both sexes of this species after leaving the nest is the olive-green plumage corresponding to that of the normal adult females, and in that plumage the birds of the year migrate south in the autumn. So that the aforesaid specimen shot on May 14, possibly met with an accident, losing all the feathers of the left side of the tail with the exception of the one mentioned, and these being replaced came in *green*. This seems to be the only explanation to account for the state of affairs seen in this individual.

In another specimen of this series, a young male of the first autumn in the full green plumage, shows a broadish transverse red bar across the green and perfected feathers of the tail.

Perhaps the most interesting specimen in the collection is that of a female (adult) which in the spring had, in part, the red plumage of the male, and when collected on the 2d of August, 1897, was in full moult,—the red feathers of the entire plumage being replaced by the green ones of the adult female bird with normal coloration. This particular example then, would tend to show that when the females of this species assume in the spring the red plumage of the males, that in the autumnal moult they pass back again to the plumage of the normally-colored females,—whereas the *old* males reassume the red plumage.—R. W. SHUFELDT, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.*

**Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) Breeding in Electric Arc-light Caps.**—During a recent visit to Vergennes, Vt., I noticed that many pairs of Purple Martins were nesting in the caps suspended over the electric street lamps in the heart of that rural city. Indications of the same proclivity to utilize the street lamps for domestic purposes were shown by



Purple Martins that I watched near North Adams, Mass., in 1895, and Mr. Brewster tells me that he found a pair of these birds breeding in a similar situation in Colebrook, N. H., in 1896. Probably many of the readers of 'The Auk' who live in a Martin region are familiar with this nesting habit of the Martin, though I do not remember to have seen any mention of it in print. The late Frank Bolles ('Boston Post,' Feb. 3, 1891) facetiously remarked that the House Sparrow's propensity to build its nest and rear its young "on the edge of Hades" (*viz.*, in electric-lamp reflectors) was sufficient evidence that it was the offspring of evil and justly under the ban of the Commonwealth. I had always deemed this a just count against the Sparrow, until I discerned the same disposition in our own favorite Martin! I hope the lamp-tenders of Vergennes discriminate between Martins and Sparrows in their daily visits to the lamps. — WALTER FAXON, *Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

**The Tree Swallow Breeding in Virginia.** — The second edition of the A. O. U. Check-List gives the breeding range of *Tachycineta bicolor* as "breeding from the Fur Countries south to New Jersey," etc. Dr. Rives in his 'Birds of the Virginias,' page 77, says of this species: "Common summer resident of the Tidewater region from April to September, but rare away from the rivers." He mentions no instance of its breeding, however. Mr. E. J. Brown, formerly of Washington, tells me that in May, 1894, he found a nest containing eggs, on Smith's Island, Virginia. Mr. P. H. Aylett, of Aylett, King William County, Virginia, wrote me some years ago about a pair which reared their young one summer at that place. I afterwards saw the site — a cherry stump in a meadow. The birds are fairly numerous on Smith's Island in summer, and I found a nest containing three young, in a hollow tree near the ocean beach, on June 10, 1897. — WILLIAM PALMER, *Washington, D. C.*

**Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) in Greene and Ulster Counties, N. Y.** — On May 29, 1897, I found a pair of Rough-winged Swallows beginning to build in Palenville, Greene County, June 11. The nest with six eggs was procured. At Quarryville (about five miles south of Palenville, being in the extreme northern part of Ulster County) there is a small colony of these birds breeding regularly every year, in the crevices of the rocks. Here I took a male specimen June 27, 1896, and a nest containing five eggs June 29, 1897. These specimens were identified by Mr. Frank M. Chapman. — S. H. CHUBB, *New York City.*

**Peculiar Nesting of the Maryland Yellow-throat.** — While collecting in a large slough in Jackson County, Minnesota, on June 9, 1897, amid the green rushes where Long- and Short-billed Marsh Wrens were breeding, I ran across a pair of Yellow-throats (*Geothlypis trichas*) in some high rushes in about four feet of water, and upon investigating I found the nest placed almost level with the water in a thick clump of cat-tails, over fifty feet from shore, and right in the midst of a colony of Marsh



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