



Where East Meets West

EAST meets West—if you go far enough south.

That is one of the things Dr. Alexander Wetmore of the U. S. National Museum found during a six-weeks' expedition to study the birds of Guatemala, from which he recently returned.

In the highlands of the Central American republic, the first birds that caught his eye were old familiar friends from the United States, down there for the winter, or in transit through the funnel-throat of Central America on their way into the wider forests of South America. Over 200 species of North American birds are known as winter migrants in Guatemala.

And since Atlantic and Pacific are not very far apart in the Central American region, bird species characteristically at home in the Alleghenies there fraternize with other species that never nest east of the Rockies. Dr. Wetmore often saw, in the same Guatemalan tree, birds that would never be found within a thousand miles of each other when they are at home.

Dr. Wetmore also found in the pine

and oak forests of the Guatemalan mountains many genera of birds close of kin to North American birds, but distinctively Central American, never straying northward. Such familiar fowl as woodpeckers, kingfishers, song sparrows, swifts, hawks and owls were found mingled with trogons, motmots, and other birds never found in the temperate zone.

On one lake Dr. Wetmore collected six specimens of helldivers, or grebe, very similar in coloration to the common helldiver of the United States and Canada, but very much larger. This lake is the only place in the world where this giant grebe is found.

An oddity of bird behavior noted by Dr. Wetmore in one place he visited was the eating of avocados by a species of black vulture, which elsewhere feeds only on a flesh diet. The avocados of that particular locality are of extra choice quality, but since they retail at only a quarter of a cent apiece the growers do not trouble to harvest their whole crop. Hence, whenever a gust of wind shakes a grove, a lot of over-ripe fruits drop to the ground and burst open with loud pops. Whereupon the waiting vultures in the treetops drop to the ground also, and feast on the rich pulp.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

College Students Taller, Heavier Than 20 Years Ago

COLLEGE freshmen are taller, heavier and younger than those of twenty years ago.

Several years ago Harvard University discovered that its students were growing taller at the rate of one inch every thirty-two years. But, it was argued, Harvard students represent a privileged

RADIO

March 2, 5:15 p.m., E.S.T.
JUNGLE AND DESERT AMERICANS
—Dr. Vincent Petruccio, explorer, anthropologist.

March 9, 5:15 p.m., E.S.T.
EGYPTIAN TOMB DISCOVERIES—
Ambrose Lansing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

class. What about middle class Americans?

The University of Cincinnati undertook to find out. Its students come from middle class homes, very few are specially privileged and many are underprivileged and entirely self-supporting.

Dr. Laurence B. Chenoweth of the students' health service, assisted by National Youth Administration workers, has studied the history and physical examination records of every Cincinnati freshman for the last twenty years.

1.78 Inches in 20 Years

Men freshmen entering this university for the 1935-36 term were a full 1.78 inches taller than those entering in 1916. Freshmen women entering in 1935-36 were 0.79 inch taller, on the average, than those admitted twenty years earlier.

Weight has increased gradually during that period in all students, although the increase has been greater for men than for women.

In 1916 the average male student entered this university at the age of 19.45 years. In 1935-36 the average age for entering students was 18.83 for men and 18.60 for women.

"The probable causes of the increase in stature and weight of young people are better nutrition in infancy and childhood, less communicable disease, higher standards of living, and a higher degree of health intelligence among people in general," comments Dr. Chenoweth, in presenting his study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Jan. 30).

Those who have contributed most to this improved state, in Dr. Chenoweth's opinion, are doctors (particularly pediatricians), nutritionists, public health workers and educators.

These studies in the "end product of the public schools" seem to indicate that a definite racial betterment is taking place in the United States and that the improvement is only partially influenced by social and economic position, this university health worker concludes.

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