

mage of *Somateria spectabilis*: Arthur H. Norton; The Summer Molting Plumage of Eider Ducks: Witmer Stone; An Oregon Fish Hawk Colony: Vernon Bailey; The Sequence of Plumages and Molts in Certain Families of North American Birds: Jonathan Dwight, Jr.; The Ranges of *Hylocichla fuscescens* and *Hylocichla f. salicicola*: Reginald Heber Howe, Jr.; On the Occurrence of the Egyptian Goose, (*Chenolopea aegyptiaca*) in North America: Frank C. Kirkwood; Further Remarks on the Relationships of the Grackles of the Subgenus *Quiscalus*: Frank M. Chapman; A Peculiar Sparrow Hawk: William Palmer; The Requirements of a Faunal List: W. E. Clyde Todd; Language of the Birds: Nelson R. Wood; A New Wren from Alaska: Harry C. Oberholser; The Molt of the Flight-Feathers in various Orders of Birds: Witmer Stone; Some Cuban Birds: John W. Daniel, Jr.; On the Orientation of Birds: Captain Gabriel Reynaud, French army.

The next meeting will be held in Cambridge, Mass., commencing November 12, 1900.

JOHN H. SAGE,  
Secretary.

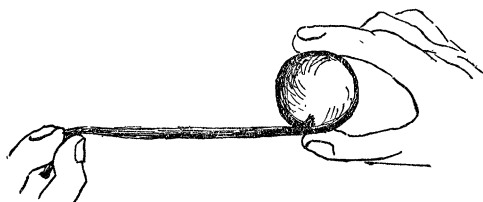
#### DEMONSTRATING THE CURVE OF THE BASE BALL IN THE LECTURE ROOM.

THE limited space in the lecture room, and the presence of one's audience makes a demonstration of curve pitching difficult even if one has the necessary skill. If the curve is to be made at all apparent in a limited space the ball must be exceedingly light, and the axial rotation very rapid.

I have found the ordinary oak-ball or oak-apple very suitable for this purpose. The rough surface gives the necessary friction, and the ball itself is as light as an egg shell and much stronger.

A strip of rubber band about 15 cms. long and 0.5 cm. wide is wound under tension around the ball (two or three turns are enough), and the ball 'catapulted' forward

by means of the remainder of the band as shown in the figure. The ball will rise,



drop, or curve to one side, according to the position in which it is held. A total deflection of  $45^\circ$  is easily obtained, and when pitching the rise (which is the case shown in the figure) the ball, starting in a horizontal direction, will sometimes ascend half way to the ceiling. This curve is the most striking of course, as the attraction of gravitation is overcome. It shows to the best advantage when thrown directly away from the observer, but this of course is difficult in the lecture hall.

These oak balls are also very suitable for showing the suspension of a ball in an air jet.

R. W. Wood.

#### THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

THE report of the Secretary of Agriculture for 1899, just issued, shows that the Department has had a prosperous year and that the volume of its practical and administrative work has largely increased. At the same time there has been advancement in a number of lines of technical and scientific work.

The extension of the Weather Bureau service around the Caribbean Sea has been abundantly successful in noting the first indications of cyclones and forecasting their movements. Warnings of cold waves have been particularly successful during the past year. A climate and crop service has been successfully established in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and similar work in Alaska has been extended into the interior. The records of