electors, with increases of 234,314 and 400,400 in the respective sexes over the preceding year.

THE THAYER ORNITHOLOGICAL COLLECTION

WHAT is perhaps the finest private collection of North American birds, nests and eggs has been given to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard by the owner and collector, John Eliot Thayer, of the class of 1885. The collection, numbering about 30,000 skins and many thousand sets of nests and eggs, includes almost all the rarest North American birds and their eggs.

Mr. Thayer has sent out many carefully planned expeditions in an effort to secure rare specimens. His parties have visited Alaska, northeastern Siberia, the Queen Charlotte Islands, Lower California and northern Mexico. In Alaska one of his parties discovered the nesting place and secured the only surf bird's eggs known to be in any collection.

The bird skins in this collection are said to be beautifully prepared by the most expert taxidermists. One of the examples of this work is an adult male Labrador duck, a species extinct for sixty to seventy-five years. The Thayer specimen, formerly in the collection of Lord Derby, of England, is probably the best preserved bird of the species.

The Thayer collection recalls the fact that the United States once had parrots living within its borders; four specimens of the excessively rare western race of the Carolina parakeet, a species of parrot, from Oklahoma, will be added to the exhibit of extinct birds already on display at the Museum of Comparative Zoology. There is in Mr. Thayer's collection a series of examples of the extinct Eskimo curlew, or "dough bird," and specimens of the passenger pigeon, the bird which once darkened the western plains, extinct now for thirty years.

The bird skins include many collected by Mr. Thayer's expeditions in the peninsula of lower California. The university collections will also be enriched by a group which fills the gaps in the Harvard series from the Queen Charlotte Islands. There is a series of the Imperial woodpecker from the highlands of northern Mexico, and examples of the now rare ivory-billed woodpecker, together with a section of the cypress log in which is the nesting cavity with the set of eggs found there.

The collection of eggs includes ten eggs of the great auk, extinct since 1845. Harvard has now eleven auk eggs, or about one sixth of those known. There are several California condor eggs, almost the only examples of such eggs found in their natural surroundings. Several eggs of that condor have been secured from birds at the Washington Zoological Park, but few in the wild surroundings of the rocky coast where the bird nests. The first two sets of the eggs of the spoonbilled sandpiper ever found are in Mr. Thayer's collection. A set of "knot's" eggs taken by Admiral Peary on his last trip to the Arctic is included.

MEDALISTS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY[1]

COPLEY MEDAL, AWARDED TO SIR ARTHUR SCHUSTER

SIR ARTHUR SCHUSTER was the first to show the important information to be got by measuring quantitatively the magnetic deflection of cathode rays. He showed how, by combining this measurement with the potential difference which generates the rays, it was theoretically possible to determine without ambiguity the velocity, and the ratio of charge to mass, of the particles constituting the corpuscular stream. We owe to him other almost equally fundamental contributions to the study of electric discharge in gases. Thus he showed that the passage of a luminous discharge put the gas temporarily into a conducting state, due to the presence of charged ions: these ions were able to diffuse into a space screened from the discharge by a wire gauze partition, and they could then be put into evidence by showing the conductivity of the gas under electromotive forces of a fraction of a volt. Sir Arthur was the first to show by experiment that in Crooke's radiometer the reaction was not on the sun but on the glass case of the instrument, thereby connecting the action with the residual gas. He has also made many important contributions to terrestrial magnetism. In spectroscopy he formulated independently the Rydberg-Schuster law. He invented the periodogram method of looking for periodicities in statistical material, a method which has been widely adopted by workers in many branches of inquiry, extending even into economics.

ROYAL MEDAL, AWARDED TO SIR RICHARD GLAZEBROOK

For fifty years Sir Richard Glazebrook has been closely identified with research on physical standards, and particularly electrical standards. For many years he conducted researches associated with the absolute measurement of resistance, current and inductance, and the results of this work are reflected in the present remarkable accuracy of electrical measurements. The name of Sir Richard Glazebrook is also world-known on account of his directorship of the National Physical Laboratory; it is largely due to his influence on the researches at that institution that

[1] Extracts, as printed in *Nature*, from the remarks made by Sir F. Gowland Hopkins, president of the Royal Society, in bestowing the medals of the society at the anniversary meeting on November 30.