Deflections may be due to irregularity of density within the earth or to attraction of parts of the earth above the surface of the mean spheroid. By an ingenious method, partly graphical, the author had found it practicable to take account of the influence of all known topographical features on the plumb-line at more than 200 stations; it is usually necessary to consider all the land-masses within 2,500 miles of the station. When these computed deflections from known causes are combined with the deflections found from geodetic measurements, the quantities to be accounted for by irregularities within the earth's surface are usually much greater than had been supposed heretofore.

CHARLES K. WEAD,
Secretary.

MICHIGAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB.

THE Michigan Ornithological Club held its last quarterly meeting for 1904 at the Detroit Museum of Art on December 2. The following program was presented:

P. A. TAVERNER: 'Re Kirtland's Warbler.'

A. W. BLAIN, JR.: 'Some Phases of the Life History of the House Wren.'

J. WILBUR KAY: 'Remarks on the Cowbird.'

DR. P. E. MOODY: 'Nesting of the Blue-gray Gnat-catcher in Wayne and Oakland Counties, Michigan.'

J. CLAIRE WOOD: 'Notes on a Great Horned Owl in Captivity.'

A. B. KLUGH: 'Summer Birds of Puschlinch, Lake Ontario.'

The following were presented by title:

PROFESSOR WALTER B. BARROWS: 'Birds of the Beaver Islands, Michigan.'

DR. MORRIS GIBBS: 'Bird's Nesting.'

WM. H. DUNHAM: 'A Preliminary List of the Birds of Kalkaska County, Michigan.'

PROFESSOR FRANK SMITH: 'An Unusual Flight of Sparrow Hawks in Michigan in 1904.'

CHAS. C. ADAMS: 'A Natural History Expedition to Northern Michigan.'

The next meeting of the society will be held on March 3, 1905. A. W. BLAIN, JR.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT FACTS.

IN Powell's 'Truth and Error' a philosophic distinction is made by giving special

definitions to the terms *property* and *quality*. A property is an essential characteristic considered in itself; a quality is a characteristic considered in relation to man. Thus the ductility of iron is a property; its utility a quality. The form and coloration of a tree are properties; its beauty or ugliness is a quality. Iron's property of ductility, when thought of in connection with human needs, is a factor of its quality of utility; and the properties of the tree, when viewed from the standpoint of man's esthetic sense, are qualities. This simple distinction is of far-reaching application, because properties are the domain of science and qualities the domain of art. Pure science (with a reservation in respect to anthropology) is not at all concerned with qualities, and when the investigator deals with them he passes into the field of applied science, or the arts. Failure to recognize this distinction leads to much confusion of thought and expression.

One of the milder or less harmful, but at the same time most conspicuous, manifestations of this confusion is connected with the word *interesting*. Not unfrequently an essay ostensibly and mainly scientific will contain the statement that an object, or relation, or other phenomenon is 'interesting,' the context indicating that interest is supposed to inhere in the phenomenon. As a matter of fact, interest is a mental attitude of the observer, and the adjective 'interesting,' though applied to the phenomenon, describes only the observer's relation to it. There are, of course, many legitimate uses of the adjective, and some of these occur in scientific writings. When an author, for example, declares that the insect habits he is about to describe are interesting to students of the psychology of the Bombocoreidae, it is clear that he does not deceive himself by supposing that he has named a property of the phenomena.

Something similar may be said of *important*, *valuable*, etc., when employed in scientific description. In common with *novel*, *pertinent*, *significant*, and the like, they indicate the relations of phenomena to the condition of human knowledge. Just as each observed fact has at some time, temporarily, the quality of novelty,