

Preface

The Penrose Memorial Lecture for 1962, by Robert Cushman Murphy, Lamont Curator Emeritus of Birds at the American Museum of Natural History, is the twenty-eighth in a series established in 1934 by the American Philosophical Society in recognition of a large bequest from one of its members, Dr. Richard A. F. Penrose, Jr. The list of Penrose lecturers, members or guests of the Society, now includes many well-known scientists, scholars and men of affairs.

Surely, however, none of these eminent men spoke with greater affection for his subject, nor clothed his learning in more colorful language, than Dr. Murphy, when he told the story of nature and man on Long Island, the land of his own birth and his lifelong home. As a boy he learned to know the varied terrain of the island, from the Sound to the sea, from Montauk to the Narrows, and the creatures, plants, animals and men that lived upon its soil and its sands or swam in its waters. In later years, as a naturalist of far-ranging experience, he views these scenes of his youth with deeper understanding, through the eyes of a scientist and student of human history.

Likewise a native of Long Island, Walt Whitman has written of "fish-shape Paumánok" with a poet's abandon. Dr. Murphy, choosing some of Whitman's lines as an introduction to his lecture, gave, in prose worthy to follow the poet's verse, a scientist's precise account of the land and its inhabitants, tinged with nostalgia for bygone days and vanished creatures, yet filled with a joyful sense of the timeless beauty of earth and living things.

G.W.C.