

thologists, whose names appear in the report, give the remarkable figures which influence Mr. Hornaday's estimates.

Game and plume birds are unquestionably on the high road to extermination, and certain species of our small birds are decreasing, but the general destruction in the latter class is probably not nearly so great as Mr. Hornaday's figures imply.

This side of the question is of such especial importance to ornithologists that it seems desirable to emphasize the difficulty of reaching accurate results from such data,—especially as sentiment often unconsciously leads us to make extreme statements.

The estimates on page 95 to which we take exception do not, however, detract from the importance and beneficial effect of this valuable report, and it is earnestly to be hoped that Mr. Hornaday's closing suggestions, both as to birds and mammals, may be seriously considered by our legislators, especially as to the suppression of promiscuous egg collecting and traffic in eggs, birds, and game.—W. S.

Sketches of Some Common Birds.¹—The author has here brought together a series of bird biographies most of which have been published previously in periodicals. They treat at considerable length of fifty-five species and, issued in book form, make a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the life-histories of our more common birds.

They are based on observations apparently all made in central Illinois and evidently extending over a considerable term of years. Mr. Silloway writes with the enthusiasm of a bird-lover and the care of a discriminating bird-student. He presents facts which we do not recall having seen before in print, but to our mind is rather further from the mark than most authors when he writes of birds' notes. Thus he states that the Bobolinks of his region are not superior as songsters to the Horned Larks or Dickcissels, the American Bittern's booming cry suggests to him the syllables "boo-hoo," and while his biography of the Least Bittern shows that he has had excellent opportunities to study this interesting species, he seems unfamiliar with its *coo, qua*, and *tut-tut-tut* notes, saying that he has "never heard an individual utter a call or cry of any kind."

The book deserves an index and in supplying it we trust that the author will also give a prefatory note stating where and when his observations were made.

The illustrations are half-tone reproductions of interesting photographs of birds and nests from nature.—F. M. C.

Oölogical Abnormalities.²—Having devoted much time to securing sets

¹ Sketches | of | Some Common Birds | By | P. M. Silloway | Cincinnati, Ohio | The Editor Publishing Company | No. 327 Pike Building | 1897. 8vo. pp. 331, pll. 17.

² Gleanings from Nature, No. 1. Oölogical Abnormalities. By J. Warren Jacobs. Published by the Author, Waynesburg, Pa. 1898. 8vo, pp. 36, half-tone pll. iv.

of birds' eggs exhibiting some abnormalism, Mr. Jacobs presents us with the results of his studies of one hundred and ten sets of eggs varying in whole or part from the normal in size, shape, or color. The four hundred and thirty-three eggs included in the one hundred and ten sets are tabulated in such manner as best to illustrate their departure from the normal, and under the heads of 'Time of Deposition,' 'Age of Females,' and 'Fertility of Contents' the author discusses the probable causes of abnormalism, giving much interesting and suggestive information. The paper is to be welcomed as an effort to raise the standard of contributions to oölogical literature, which too often consist of mere enumeration of sets and tables of measurements.—F. M. C.

Rowley's 'Art of Taxidermy,'¹—The origin of the art of taxidermy in this country could doubtless be traced to the establishment of Henry A. Ward of Rochester. Having among his customers museums, colleges, and other scientific institutions, which both demanded and could afford to pay for high-class material, the specimens leaving his shops were prepared after the latest and most approved methods. The house of H. A. Ward & Co. consequently became a school for taxidermists and when our museums first added taxidermists to their corps of assistants the positions were often filled with Ward's pupils. Thus W. T. Hornaday at the United States National Museum, and through him the late Jenness Richardson at the American Museum of Natural History, secured posts where, unhampered by commercial considerations, they could give free rein to their ambition as taxidermic artists. With the results of their work as it is displayed in their respective museums, the interested public is fully acquainted. In Hornaday's case there resulted not only series of beautifully mounted animals but a work on taxidermy² which adequately represented the development of the subject treated at the time of its publication.

About these two centers of activity in museum taxidermy there was gathered a force of assistants who were given every opportunity for study and experimentation. Among these was Mr. John Rowley who, as one of Richardson's aids at the American Museum of Natural History, developed such marked talent for his chosen calling that on the lamented death of his chief, in 1893, Rowley was called on to fill his position.

¹The Art | of Taxidermy | By | John Rowley | Chief of the Department of Taxidermy in the | American Museum of Natural History, New York City; | Member of the New York Zoölogical Society, etc. | [quotation, seal] | Illustrated with twenty full-page plates | and fifty-nine drawings in the text | New York | D. Appleton and Company | 1898. 12 mo. pp. xi + 244, pll. xx, cuts 59. \$2.00.

²Taxidermy and Zoölogical Collecting. Scribner's Sons.