

de celui de San Luis Potosi et le nord-est de Guanajuato, les forêts de la Huasteca Potasina ont pris feu : l'incendie s'est propagée assez rapidement, et les perroquets et autres oiseaux, fuyant devant elle, sont arrivés en bandes considérables, produisant partout les mêmes dégâts.

J'ai pensé que cette observation, toute accidentelle qu'elle est, pourrait intéresser l'Union des Ornithologistes qui s'occupe avec tant d'intérêt de tout ce qui a rapport aux oiseaux.—O. DUGÈS, *Guanajuato, Mexico*.

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### RECENT LITERATURE.

**Elliot's Wild Fowl of North America.**—Mr. Elliot's 'Wild Fowl,' as explained on the title page,<sup>1</sup> includes the Swans, Geese, Ducks, and Mergansers of North America, and is uniform in style of publication and method of treatment with his 'North American Shore Birds' and his 'Gallinaceous Game Birds of North America,' published respectively in 1895 and 1897, and reviewed at length in the pages of this journal (XIII, 1896, pp. 64-67, and XV, 1898, pp. 63-65). These three volumes, well illustrated and tastefully printed, include practically all of the so-called Game Birds of North America. They are designed as popular hand-books, for the sportsman and general reader. An account of the habits and haunts of each species is given under its English name; this is followed, in smaller type, by its approved technical name, without synonymy or bibliographical references, and a few paragraphs giving in plain language a description of the bird in its various phases of plumage, and its geographical distribution.

In a preface of six pages the author makes a fervent protest against the wholesale, indiscriminate and unceasing slaughter of these beautiful and economically highly important species, which has been their fate till

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<sup>1</sup>The | Wild Fowl | of the | United States | and | British Possessions | or the | Swan, Geese, Ducks, and Mergansers | of | North America | with accounts of their habits, nesting, migra- | tions, and dispersions, together with descrip- | tions of the adults and young, and keys for the ready identification of the species | A book for the Sportsman, and for those desirous of knowing how to | distinguish these web-footed birds and to learn | their ways in their native wilds | By Daniel Giraud Elliot, F. R. S. E., etc. | . . . [8 lines of titles of the author's previous works, etc.] | With sixty-three plates. | New York | Francis P. Harper | 1898—8vo, pp. i-xxii + 19-316, frontispiece and 63 half-tone plates.

only a few, comparatively speaking, yet remain. As he says: "From the time the birds leave the frozen Northland, until the survivors return to it again in the ensuing year, the hunted fowl run the gauntlet of a nation in arms; and no sooner do they pass the boundaries of the land they seek in the spring for the purpose of reproduction, than the natives continue the slaughter of the birds until they depart for southern climes. Is it any wonder that their numbers are diminishing; is it not rather a wonder that so many are left?"

In an 'Introduction' of six pages the author gives an excellent summary of the leading characteristics of the Duck tribe in general. The 'keys' and other technical matter are relegated to a 40-page Appendix, where also various points of nomenclature and classification are considered. He gives his reasons (which are further elaborated in this number of 'The Auk,' pp. 226-229) for placing all of the Swans in the genus *Cygnus*, and for rejecting *Olor* as untenable. He also claims the tenability of the genus *Exanthemops* for Ross's Goose, and refers the Wood Duck to the Old World subfamily Plectropterinae, where we think it quite as much out of place as it is in the Anatinae. His claims for *Exanthemops* are quite in harmony with his view of genera among the Water Fowl, for he has not only raised all of the groups formerly recognized in the A. O. U. Check-List as subgenera to the rank of full genera, but also separates generically the Canvas-back from the Redhead. He also adopts various emendations of names previously proposed by the 'good spellers.'

The 63 full-page plates are mostly, as in the previous volumes of this series, by Edwin Sheppard, but four are by the late John Wolf, and quite a number by the author, in each case reduced by Mr. Sheppard from larger drawings. There is also a frontispiece, giving a very good likeness of the author.

As the author has had a wide experience with the birds in life of which his books treat, much of what he has to say of their habits and distribution is given from personal knowledge. -- J. A. A.

**Thompson's 'Wild Animals I have Known.'**<sup>1</sup> -- Of the eight charming stories brought together and beautifully illustrated under the above title only two, 'Silverspot' and 'Redruff,' relate to birds. But the ornithologist who once takes the book in hand will doubtless find its pages, with their effective illustrations, too fascinating to wish to lay it finally aside till all have been read. The 'stories' are, as described in the title page, 'personal histories' of animals Mr. Thompson has studied in life, and

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<sup>1</sup> Wild Animals I have Known and 200 Drawings. By Ernest Seton Thompson. Being the Personal Histories of Lobo, Silverspot, Raggylug, Bingo, The Springfield Fox, The Pacing Mustang, Wully, and Redruff. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899. 8vo, pp. 358.