

naturalist, in a private letter speaks about the rural bird life of his locality as follows:

"The Canario of the Brazilians, *Sycalis foveola* Pelz., is found in this State. Right near Sao Paulo it is rare. Indeed nearly all the birds are killed by the Italians, who use them as food, and it is difficult to find a dozen species near the city. In the country, however, and especially about the farms and buildings the Canario is quite common.

The two commonest birds about Sao Paulo are *Troglodytes furvus* Wied (Curruira), and *Zonotrichia pileata* Pelz. (Tico-tico). On the farms one also finds *Sycalis foveola*, *Turdus leucomelas* Vieill. (Sabiá), *Mimus spec.*, *Milvulus tyrannus* (L.) (Tesoura), *Pitangus sulphuratus* (L.) (Bemtevi), usually one or two Woodpeckers, occasionally a Tucano, and often several species of Paroquets and Parrots, such as *Psittacula passerina* (L.), the Tuim; *Brotogerys tirica* (Gm.), the Periquito; *Pionus maxilliani* (Kuhl.), the Maitacca.

"A person who is accustomed to the variety of bird forms in the northern woods is struck with the absence of birds in the Brazilian forest, and yet many birds abound, for over five hundred species are recorded from the State of Sao Paulo alone. But the birds seem to be more solitary here. They do not sing and chatter at daybreak as they do in the United States. I have been in camp in the virgin forest, ten miles away from any house, and have not heard a note of a bird all day. One bird, however, the Tangara, *Chiroxiphia caudata* (Shaw), a beautiful small bird of blue plumage and red head, will congregate in numbers, especially during the mating season, and sing and hop and dance for hours at a time. I have often enjoyed watching them and listening to their songs."
—H. NEHRLING, *Milwaukee, Wisc.*

Sanitary Habits of Birds.—I read, in the April Auk, Mr. F. H. Herick's article on the sanitary habits of birds and was much pleased and profited by it. I was disappointed in one respect only—that was that it did not throw any confirmatory light upon a recent observation of my own which had puzzled me a little.

Late last summer I was watching a pair of Baltimore Orioles feeding their young, when I saw the male take a soft white pellicle from the open and extended mouth of a nestling, and drop it some yards from the nest.

This was new procedure to me, and I began at once to review the subject of feeding habits, as it was noted in my scant library, but I could find nothing about it. While I was about to doubt my own eyes (at thirty feet through a good opera glass) I received a letter from Mr. H. B. Rugg, of Vermont, saying that some friends of his had been watching some Robins as they fed their young, and had seen the parents take some round white substance from the throats of the nestlings; and they wanted him to tell them what this was. Then he wrote and asked me what it was.

It seemed quite a coincidence that he should pass this query on to me just when I was suffering for similar information, but it confirmed my observation. Since it is well known that pellets of indigestible things are frequently thrown up by some young birds, the best that I could suggest was that this might be these same things, which, in regurgitation, had taken on the form of the usual dejections; but not being able to see any of these pellicles after they were dropped, I, of course, could not be sure. Cannot Mr. Herrick, or some close student of the habits of birds tell us something of *this*?

I had hoped to observe further before mentioning this, but my opportunities are very limited: so I concluded that I had better note it in the July 'Auk,' so that the host of nest watchers this season may, if they please, be on the lookout for the matter. So far this year I have seen nothing of the sort in casually watching two nests of Robins in my yard.

By the way, the male Oriole noted sometimes regurgitated food to the young, but the mother always came with a particle showing in her mouth. Mr. Herrick's observation that the parent ate the dejected pellicle was new and interesting to me; for, on the contrary, I have seen the Cardinal and others assiduously wipe the beak on a twig, as if the performance had been disagreeable; but then this occurs after food is taken, as well. I have noticed that the little Social Sparrows (Hair-bird) may have one place of deposit for the pellicles. For one brood they used the dead limbs of a plum tree exclusively, and none was ever dropped on the way.

There is a large field here for further observation. Let us hope for more of this, and for something further on this special topic.—JAMES NEWTON BASKETT, *Mexico, Mo.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Rothschild and Hartert's 'Review of the Ornithology of the Galapagos Islands.'¹—The Galapagos Islands have come to be ornithologically classic ground in consequence of the numerous special papers that have appeared upon the birds of this exceedingly interesting archipelago. In

¹ A Review of the Ornithology of the Galapagos Islands. With Notes on the Webster-Harris Expedition. By Hon. Walter Rothschild, Ph.D., and Ernst Hartert. *Novitates Zoologicae*, Vol. VI, pp. 85-205, pll. v and vi, August, 1899.