

CORRESPONDENCE.

Slater's Contour Map of Colorado.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

Dear Sir:— In commenting upon Slater's excellent book on the Birds of Colorado in the April number of 'The Auk,' I neglected to mention his map. It is very unfortunate that he republished this map, which is evidently taken from Rydberg's Flora of Colorado, because it is exceedingly incorrect as to contour lines. In a state like Colorado, presenting differences in altitude of a mile and a half, the altitudes of various localities are of great importance to naturalists. Altitude is an essential element in the study of the distribution of plants and animals in Colorado and of the migrations of birds. In the map in question, to take a few out of many examples, the contour lines give Boulder an altitude of about 2,000 feet too much, Golden 2,500 feet too much, Denver 1,000 feet, Trinidad 1,000 feet, Mecker is placed considerably too low, etc. Fortunately a gazetteer in each of the books mentioned will in part correct the faults of the map for those who notice and use it instead of the map. The altitudes of most of the towns of the state may also of course be obtained from the Dictionary of Altitudes published by the United States Geological Survey, or the Gazetteer of Colorado (Bulletin 291 of the same survey). These publications also give the altitudes of many other points aside from the towns. Nearly all western railway folders also give the altitudes of stations along their routes. The Colorado Geological Survey has almost ready for the printer a new topographic map of the state, based upon data from the most reliable sources, which will place the contour lines in as nearly their correct positions as can be done at present, and in those portions of the state where detailed field work has been done the lines will be very accurate. Consequently no naturalist need have any difficulty in most cases in obtaining altitudes, providing he is warned against using the map in Slater's book and in the Flora of Colorado.

JUNIUS HENDERSON.

A Correction.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sir:— I find that the Index to the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club' and 'The Auk', for the period 1876-1900 (New York, 1907), includes on page 72 the titles of all the contributions of the late Captain John Clifford Brown, U. S. V.¹ under another's name, though on page 235 "Brown, J. C." is given credit for four of them which relate to

¹ See Auk' XVIII, pp. 220-221.

Maine and on page 45 for one which relates to the Atlantic Ocean. Corrections as to authorship should therefore be made in the case of the following titles appearing on page 72 of the Index:

Carpodacus purpureus at Portland, Maine, in winter.

Early appearance of *Empidonax minimus* at Portland, Maine.

Unusual nesting site of *Dendroica virens*.

Winter notes from Portland, Maine.

American Crossbill at sea.

These were published by Captain Brown.

Yours very truly,

N. C. B.

Concealing Coloration.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sir:—The naturalists answer about this or that creature, whose wonderful background matching I show, that he has no use for concealment. Here they are in their own field though venturing far beyond scientific knowledge; but this does not in the slightest degree affect the all the more interesting fact of his astoundingly perfect background painting. And because *in all these cases*, these creatures (supposed to need no concealment) nevertheless have it *from the very situation from which some animals see them*. I do not believe that so wonderful an equipment is for nothing, and I doubt the naturalists' assertion that it does not help the wearer.

Most naturalists also deride the idea that so vast a variety of costume as that of the forest fauna could all be subject to one law of concealing coloration.

Concealing coloration is simply that which passes the wearer off for *any details* of the scene, and of these the forest contains of course a boundless variety. To test at the start the probability of such a general law, turn from the complexities of the forest to the simplicity of other realms, the sea, the sands, the snow—look at the inhabitants of all these more or less monochrome parts of the world, and you will find that everywhere the nearer to one single color note is the scene the nearer to a corresponding single color note is the animal's costume.

Let them tell me why this so widespread resemblance of inhabitants to background should suddenly cease when one comes to the complex scenery of the woods, which offer a *hundred* models for counterfeiting where the sea, snow or desert offers one.

Therefore, since each different forest costume is a duplicate of some part of the scene, the catchword that if in the same woods any particular costume is a concealer the others are not, boils down to the same absurdity as saying that if one of the *things* they counterfeit is real, the others aren't—in other words, if the tree trunk is real, the leaves are not.