

## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Gurney's 'The Gannet.'**<sup>1</sup>—It is refreshing to be able to turn from the multitude of faunal papers and diagnoses of new subspecies which make up such a large proportion of the ornithological literature of the day, to a work dealing exclusively with a single species, but treating it exhaustively from practically every point of view. Such a work is Mr. Gurney's portly volume on the Gannet. With an interest aroused nearly fifty years ago the author has lost no opportunity to add to his stock of information concerning this interesting bird until he has been able to compile a work which for years to come will be our chief work of reference for this species. He has delved into the works of old voyagers and explorers and into ancient historic volumes for the hidden lore that they contain; visited most of the existing colonies of Gannets, conducted correspondence with hosts of persons acquainted with the bird in life as well as those conversant with its history in the past and studied all the scientific literature dealing with it.

The Chapter headings from which one may gain some idea of the scope of the work are: I. Names of the Gannet; II. Distribution; III–IX. Descriptions of the present colonies; X. Abandoned Breeding Colonies; XI. Numbers; XII. Nidification; XIII. Nestling; XIV. Habits; XV. Food; XVI. Flight; XVII. Mortality; XVIII. Age; XIX. Gannets as Food; XX. Plumage; XXI. Osteology; XXII. Anatomy. There are also; a historical preface, introduction, bibliography and five appendices dealing with allied species, tropical Boobies, parasites, historic and prehistoric remains and fossils. Mr. Gurney has well called the Gannet 'a bird with a history' and the historic portions of his monograph are most interesting reading, particularly the quotations from Martin Martin, Gent., who in 1698 published an account of a voyage that he had made to "St. Kilda the remotest of all the Hebrides" and whose account of the Gannet is considered by Mr. Gurney to be one of the best that has been published. Martin moreover has much of interest to say on other species besides Gannets. He tells us that he and his crew were made most welcome on their arrival and were liberally supplied with eggs mainly those of the Guillemot. During their three weeks' stay they consumed 16,000 or 18 eggs *per diem* for each man. Our author remarks that "One wonders not so much at the islanders collecting 16,000 eggs, which would be an easy task, as at the capacity which Martin and his crew possessed to eat so many."

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<sup>1</sup> The Gannet | A Bird With a History | By | J. H. Gurney, F. Z. S. | Author of "A Catalogue of the Birds of Prey (Accipitres and | Striges), with the number of Specimens in Norwich Museum." | Illustrated with numerous Photographs, Maps and Drawings, and one Colored Plate by Joseph Wolf | Witherby & Co. | 326 High Holborn, London | 1913. 8vo. pp. 1-ii + 1-567. Price 25s. net.

The history of the Gannet however dates far back of Martin's time, not only is there an admirable story of the Bass Rock Gannets in the 'Historia Majoris Britanniaë' 1521, but mention is made of the birds in an inventory of the resources of Lundy Island in 1274 during the reign of Edward I, and the name Gannet occurs in an Anglo Saxon poem by Beowulf A. D. 597.

The name Gannet seems to come from the same source as gans, gander and goose; while 'Soland' or 'Solon Goose' is from the Icelandic 'sula-n' *i. e.*, 'the Gannet.'

Gannets now breed on a limited number of rocky, more or less inaccessible islets in the northern seas, which they have occupied from time immemorial. Lundy Island off the English coast is at present abandoned on account of the persecution of the birds. The inhabited islets are Grassholm, Wales; Bull Rock and The Skelligs, Ireland; Bass Rock, Ailsa Craig, St. Kilda Islands, Sulisgeir and The Stack of Stack and Skerry, Scotland; Mygganaes, Færøes; Sulusker, Eldey and Grimsey, Iceland; and Bird Rocks and Bonaventure, Canada. The total number of birds now living is estimated by Mr. Gurney as 101,000 (exclusive of course of the allied species of South Africa and Australia).

The accounts of the habits of the bird contain a vast amount of information from the personal observation of the author and from various other sources, while the chapters on osteology and anatomy contain extracts from probably all the published papers touching on the subject. Mr. Gurney is to be congratulated upon the successful completion of a most valuable addition to ornithological literature, while the publishers have contributed their share in producing a beautiful example of book making — admirable typography and half-tones and an attractive binding.— W. S.

**Sage and Bishop on the Birds of Connecticut.**<sup>1</sup>— Thirty-six years have passed since the appearance of the last list of Connecticut birds,— that prepared by Dr. C. Hart Merriam in 1877. Both the lapse of time and the enormous strides that have been taken in the study of American ornithology, have made it highly desirable that we should have a more modern work on the birds of the state, which would bring the knowledge of the subject up to date. It would have been difficult to pick two men better qualified for this task than the authors of the work before us and the results of their labors are quite up to our expectations.

The main part of the work consists of an annotated list of 329 species with an appendix including seven introduced species and ten of doubtful status. The data under each are based upon the collections and notes of the authors and upon information furnished them or recorded by others.

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<sup>1</sup> The Birds of Connecticut | By John Hall Sage, M. S. | Secretary of the American Ornithologists' Union | and | Louis Bennett Bishop, M. D. | Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union | assisted by | Walter Parks Bliss, M. A. | *vignette.* | Hartford. | Printed for the State Geological and Natural History Survey, | 1913. | Bulletin No. 20. | 8vo. pp. 1-370.