

"The Way to Study Birds."

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK'

After reading several of the reviews of my recent book, 'The Way to Study Birds,' I have been tempted to write a few words in explanation. Apparently in my preface I rather failed in my attempt to give an adequate idea of the book's purpose. In this connection, however, I have perhaps my best clue furnished by a reviewer in 'The Nation,' who writes that I have given "a handbook to the study of a handbook." This then was my object: to make clear the way for the beginner so that the many ornithological "handbooks" could be of use to him; so that he can be brought to the viewpoint where he is able to advantageously employ them. To continue, as 'The Nation' amits, my book is "no substitute for the amply illustrated manuals by Chester Reed and others." I have used very much these same words myself, as perhaps anyone who has really read my book will remember. It is to make possible an understanding of the "manuals", and to give a course of study, which followed throughout holds good, that I wrote my book. But I did not consider it necessary to give more than fifty examples of my plan. By that time, an *average* person is able to understand the work and continue by self-instruction.

Unfortunately, in their review of my book, 'The Nation' made two scientific errors of fact. The Turkey Vulture or "*buzzard*" is a common summer resident throughout the area covered by my book and is not "entirely unknown" in any part for which it was written. This is similarly true of the Starling. It is, I hope, unnecessary to refute the other fact, as expounded by 'The Nation,' that, for example, an English Sparrow is no more abundant than a Belted Kingfisher. These are, however, minor mistakes, and my book was written, as so well expressed, with the object of being a handbook for the study of a handbook.

J. DRYDEN KUSER.

Bernardsville, N. J., August 30, 1917.

Concealing Coloration.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

Here is Henry Drummond's paragraph on the concealing power of zebras' stripes, with a perfectly correct analysis of the thing's principle. I should have drawn attention to it long ago had I before now learned of its existence.

"When we look, for instance, at the coat of a zebra with its thunder-and-lightning pattern of black and white stripes, we should think such a conspicuous object to court, rather than elude, attention. But the effect is just the opposite. The black and white somehow take away the sense