

Glover Allen's 'Birds and their Attributes.'—Under the auspices of the Northeastern Bird Banding Association, a course of lectures on the 'Elements of Ornithology' was delivered in Boston by Dr. Glover M. Allen in the early part of 1924, with the object of developing a more intelligent interest in birds in the many persons interested in their outdoor study. These lectures are now published in book¹ form under the above title and bid fair to make a volume as popular as were the lectures themselves.

There have been a good many books published in recent years dealing with the general history and natural history of birds, many have appeared abroad, not a few of which were compilations from the older works, and none of which made reference to the results of American investigations. Others gotten out in this country were obviously prepared primarily for sale and the authors were not always equipped for the work they had undertaken. It is therefore a great satisfaction to have a book written by one thoroughly conversant with his subject and well versed in the recent work of American writers, and whose object was in the first place to present well tested facts for the purpose of education rather than to make an attractive or salable volume.

Dr. Allen's book is a scholarly treatise by one who is not only an ornithologist but a trained naturalist of broad learning, who is able to draw both upon his own experiences and upon a vast range of literature with which he is thoroughly familiar.

His chapters deal with all the important sides of bird life and structure: history of ornithology; feathers; colors; bills, feet, wings and bones; food; origin and distribution; ecological relations; eggs and nests; parasitic habits; senses and behavior; flight and song; birds at rest [sleep and roosts]; migration; nomenclature and classification.

Dr. Allen's statements of fact in relation to history, structure, food, etc., are clear and concise, and give the reader just what he desires, while in discussing controversial matters such as protective coloration, flight, migration, etc., he is careful to consider both sides of the arguments, while he frequently adds personal opinions and comments which are most enlightening. In regard to bird coloration, for instance, he says, "In a great majority of cases we know very little of the actual enemies of birds, how they escape from them or how often their protective devices are unsuccessful. It must be borne in mind, too, that man, and especially the white man, is a comparatively recent factor for wholesale destruction, so that none of the devices named are primarily meant for combating his pursuit."

This suggestion should be taken to heart by those who discuss problems of coloration entirely from the view point of human eyes and completely

¹ *Birds and their Attributes*. By Glover Morrill Allen, Ph.D. Marshall Jones Company, Boston, Massachusetts. [Size 8¼ × 6 ins.] pp. 1-xiv + 1-338. Price \$3.50.

ignore the bird's point of view, "for," says Dr. Allen, "a well-known biologist has warned us that Man is likely to mislead himself when he puts his own meaning into Nature."

In considering the possible sense of smell in the Turkey Vulture, he cites the most plausible experiments and points out where each is unconvincing because of the neglect to consider the presence of air currents and to guard against all sorts of factors which could easily have influenced the action of the birds, a care that is required in all modern investigations of animal behavior with the technique of which Dr. Allen is thoroughly acquainted.

In every chapter the reader will find most interesting discussion presented in a way that holds one's attention and avoids technicalities.

The volume is one that every bird student should read and that every ornithologist should have within reach, as it will prove invaluable as a work of reference, while the general reader will find its pages most entertaining and instructive.

There are forty-five full page illustrations mainly from photographs of living birds, selected to supplement the text, as well as half a dozen text figures, while the frontispiece is a reproduction of Benson's painting of Wild Geese rising. There is a bibliography of important papers and books and a good index, while the printing of both text and plates is beautifully done.—W. S.

Kirke Swann's 'Two Ornithologists on the Lower Danube.'—

This well printed brochure¹ describes a trip by the author and Mr. J. H. McNeile through the Dobrogea and the Danube Delta, in Rumania, during April and May, 1925. Their object was to study the birds of the region and to obtain eggs of the nesting species in which they were apparently quite successful, to judge from the annotated list of 172 species and the numerous interesting oölogical notes contained in the text. One of the most important specimens obtained was the race of the Tawny Eagle, known as *Aquila rapax culleni*, which seems to have been seldom recorded and to be little known to ornithologists.

The narrative of the trip is an interesting account of experiences, oölogical and otherwise, in a little travelled and unfamiliar country although, since we learn that it is only a three days' journey from London by the Oriental Express, we wonder why it has not been more frequently undertaken. However, when one reads that travelling, collecting, photography, shooting and carrying fire arms are all forbidden, and that the securing of permits is almost impossible, the ornithologist may well hesitate to journey

¹ Two Ornithologists on the Lower Danube. Being a Record of a Journey to the Dobrogea and the Danube Delta with a Systematic List of the Birds Observed. By H. Kirke Swann, F. Z. S. M. B. O. U. (Corresponding Fellow American Ornith. Union.) Illustrations from photographs taken by J. H. McNeile, M. B. O. U., London, Wheldon & Wesley, Ltd. 2, 3, & 4 Arthur Street, New Oxford Street, W. C. 2. 1925. pp. 1-67. [Size 12½ × 10 ins.] Price 26s. net per part.