

RECENT LITERATURE

Journals of Audubon.—Col. John E. Thayer was fortunate enough, in 1913, to obtain two journals of John J. Audubon which had never been printed. Most of the journals of the painter-ornithologist seem to have been destroyed and such of them as have been published have been so edited and “improved” that while presenting the facts they lose the personal touch that original manuscripts always possess. Col. Thayer has generously presented these diaries and some of Audubon’s account books to the Museum of Comparative Zoology where they will be safe for all time.

The Club of Odd Volumes, with the kind permission of Dr. Thomas Barbour, Director of the Museum, has published the journals in two beautiful volumes, maintaining the wording, spelling, etc., etc., with scrupulous care, under the editorship of Mr. Howard Corning, so that as we read them we are virtually perusing the original manuscripts.

The first volume¹ covers Audubon’s trip down the Ohio and Mississippi from Cincinnati to New Orleans, and residence at the latter place from October 12, 1820 to December 31, 1821. It is fascinating reading and gives us a rather different picture of the man from any that have been published by his biographers. All the details of the trip are set down roughly, with comments on the country, the weather, the people, and constant mention of birds. Turkeys are often referred to as well as Paroquets and Ivory-bills and frequent reference is made to the thousands of Geese and other water fowl. One is rather impressed by the writer’s lack of familiarity with some of the birds. He, for instance, shot a Hermit Thrush a species which he says he had never seen before and compares it with the “Golden-crowned Thrush” and the “Tawny Thrush” (Ovenbird and Thrasher), and the Rusty Blackbird he regarded as a rare species. On July 4, 1821 he presents an annotated list of the birds that he had seen and those that he missed about New Orleans. There is a casual mention: “Saw 3 Red Ibises pass over the plantation Yesterday” which constitutes the main reason for including this bird in the North American list, but considering Audubon’s lack of knowledge of southern birds at that time, as constantly shown by the diary, these may easily have been Spoonbills.

The volume is so full of interesting notes that it must be read in full to realize its importance.

The second journal² covers trips through New England, New York and Canada in search for subscribers to the octavo edition of the ‘Birds of

¹ *Journal of John James Audubon Made During his Trip to New Orleans in 1820-1821.* Edited by Howard Corning. Foreword by Ruthven Deane. Boston. The Club of Odd Volumes. MCMXXIX, pp. 1-ix + 1-239. Edition limited to 225 copies. Frontispiece portrait.

² *Journal of John James Audubon Made while Obtaining Subscriptions to his “Birds of America” 1840-1843.* Edited by Howard Corning. Foreword by Francis H. Herrick. Boston. The Club of Odd Volumes. MCMXXIX, pp. i-vii + 1-179. Edition limited to 225 copies. Frontispiece sketch of bird.

America' then being published, and purchasers for the remaining copies of the large work. While of great interest historically as throwing additional light upon the financial side of these publications it does not present the enthusiasm of the ornithologist exploring new fields which is characteristic of the earlier diary.

A reproduction of an outline sketch of a bird which was pasted in one of the journals forms a frontispiece to the second volume and an excellent reproduction of the portrait that Audubon painted of himself appears in the first.

Since the appearance of the original volumes, which were limited to an edition of 225 copies, another edition from the same type but with different paper, title page and binding, and lacking the illustrations, has been gotten out in Cambridge¹ for which we are indebted to Dr. Barbour.

There is a foreword to the first volume by Ruthven Deane and to the second by Francis H. Herrick.—W. S.

Allen's 'Book of Bird Life.'—All readers of 'Bird Lore' have profited by the admirable articles that have been appearing in the educational department for the past ten years from the pen of Dr. Arthur A. Allen, Professor of Ornithology in Cornell University, and it will be a matter of general satisfaction to learn that these have been woven into a volume under the above title² in which the original illustrations and others mainly from the camera of the author appear.

Dr. Allen's wide experience with living birds admirably fits him for preparing such a volume as he has produced. As he says in his preface: "Nearly everyone has enjoyed some unusual experience with birds which he may have been at a loss to explain," such as the pecking of a Robin on the window, the Killdeer that trails a broken wing, etc., and he continues "it is the purpose of this book not only to explain such behavior but so to equip the reader that all his past experiences with birds will arrange themselves naturally in an orderly way." Dr. Allen has, we think, fully realized his ideal in the work that he has produced and it should find a place on the book shelf of every student of the live bird.

The first part of the work deals with the birds themselves and the second part with methods for studying them. History, Classification, Distribution, Communities, Birds of Fields and Orchards, of Marshes and Shores, Migration, Courtship, Home Life, Adaptation, Coloration and Economics are the chapter headings for the first part and show how thoroughly the field is covered. In the second part we find, Bird Walks, Calendars and Banding, Birds' Nests, Attracting Birds, Observation Blinds, Bird Pho-

¹ Cambridge. The Business Historical Society. The second journal in this printing has an introduction condensed from that in the first volume, which is lacking in the original.

² The Book of Bird Life. A Study of Birds in their Native Haunts; with Photographs by the Author. By Arthur A. Allen, Ph.D., Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University; Editor, "School Department, Bird Lore." D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 250 Fourth Avenue, New York, pp. i-xix + 1-426. Price \$3.50.