

## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Austin's 'Birds of Labrador.'**—In a handsome quarto volume<sup>1</sup> (No. 7 of the Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club) Mr. O. L. Austin Jr. presents his studies of the avifauna of Newfoundland Labrador, which constitutes essentially the coast district of the Labrador Peninsula. The area west of the height of land is part of the Province of Quebec but the coast belongs to Newfoundland.

Besides utilizing the published accounts of Labrador birds and the information furnished him by residents, Mr. Austin made three voyages up the coast in 1926, '27, and '28. On the first he reached Cape Chidley at the extreme northern point of the upper Arctic coast region, secured collections and made abundant original observations on the avifauna. The other years were devoted to investigating more southern portions of the coast.

The Introduction consists of a historical account of Labrador ornithology which is followed by a chapter on the "Origin and History of the Labrador Avifauna." From the latter we learn that 177 species and subspecies of birds have been recorded from the region of which 28 are of somewhat doubtful occurrence and 27 merely casual. Of the 122 remaining about 75% are species of northern origin, "descended from the component parts of an avifauna which throughout Tertiary time was spread widely over the ancient polar land-mass," while 24% "trace their ancestry from stock probably inhabiting the American tropics or subtropics."

The Annotated List occupies most of the volume and is well prepared giving the essential facts without unnecessary duplication or tedious detail. Besides the technical and English names there are given also the local vernacular, Eskimo, and Indian names. Data on species of doubtful occurrence are given in their proper place in smaller type. In some cases where the question of subspecies is concerned there is a discussion of the relationship and characters of the Labrador form and under the Canada Jay an extended consideration of all of the seven named forms of the bird, their distribution and probable origin, although it seems unfortunate that this matter could not have been embodied in a separate paper where it would have been more accessible, for it deals only in small part with Labrador.

All in all Mr. Austin has produced an excellent work which will be our authority on the birds of the Labrador coast for many years to come; indeed it seems unlikely that we shall ever add much to his account as the country is not one calculated to attract many bird visitors or to develop additional subspecies. The stamp of the Nuttall Club and the fact that Mr. Charles F. Batchelder edited both the manuscript and proof are

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club | No. VII | The Birds | of | Newfoundland Labrador | By Oliver Luther Austin, Jr. | with map | Cambridge, Massachusetts | Published by the Club | September, 1932 | Pp. [i] + 1-229.

guarantees of a beautiful piece of book making and a perfect text both of which have been fully realized.

We hope that the day may come when nomenclature, the bane of ornithology, may be eliminated from a work of this kind and some standard list followed for the convenience of all concerned, but evidently most authors must still have their fling in selecting names. There are a number of cases in the present work where the names differ from those of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' though no reasons for the differences are given. While some of them agree with the names in Peters' 'Birds of the World' others do not. Without claiming that the A. O. U. List is "right" in every case, for many points will always remain questions of personal opinion, why not in a faunal work accept the conclusions of the Committee, except, of course, where the matter of recognition of subspecies is concerned and where the author has illuminating data to present?—W. S.

**Portraits of New England Birds.**<sup>1</sup>—It was an admirable idea to publish the ninety-three plates to Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts, etc.' in a separate volume. It will prove of the greatest value to bird study by placing in anyone's hands the best set of colored plates of birds that has yet been published. Many who cannot afford the three volumes of Forbush can easily secure these plates as the cost is almost nominal. They represent the best work of Fuertes and Brooks and are, for the most part, just as applicable to any of the states east of the Mississippi as to New England, lacking only some of the southern species.—W. S.

**Weygandt's 'A Passing America.'**<sup>2</sup>—Those of our readers who enjoyed reading Dr. Weygandt's delightful 'Wissahickon Hills' will welcome another volume<sup>2</sup> from his pen. This one deals with the passing of covered bridges, quill pens, oleander and daphne, chestnut trees, buckwheat, oxen, etc., things that those of us with memories running back thirty years or more will remember, but which are rapidly passing into the realm of things gone forever—not constituting ornithology, perhaps, but dear to the heart of every lover of the country.

One chapter in the book, however, is devoted wholly to birds and is entitled "Purple Parties" in which the author's experiences with Purple Martins are presented, birds which in eastern Pennsylvania, like the things listed above, are rapidly becoming things of yester year.

The author writes delightfully of many tramps to the Martin colony at Barren Hill, north of Philadelphia, where the birds occupied the cornice

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of New England Birds. Drawn in Color by Louis Agassiz Fuertes and Allen Brooks for 'The Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States.' By Edward Howe Forbush. Published by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1932. Price \$1.75, check or money order to be sent in advance to Room 118, State House, Boston, Mass., and made payable to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

<sup>2</sup> A Passing America.—Considerations of things of Yesterday fast fading from our World. By Cornelius Weygandt. New York, Henry Holt and Company Pp. i-xxxi + 1-330. 1932. Price \$3.00.