

and for two years now our local duck crop has been very much lessened. How much the crows have had to do with it, I don't know, but the crow is a pest and he ought to be kept down, and the only way to do it is to make him an outlaw."

It is to be regretted that the editors of our two foremost magazines of technical ornithology, to whom the public should confidently look for guidance, should be so swayed by misdirected sentiment as to deprecate the splendid work being done under the Economic Investigations Department of the Bureau of Biological Survey. The reading of the 1924 Report of the Chief of this Bureau affords a fine stimulus after the depression induced by the perusal of the Little Bedtime Stories of some of our ornithological leaders, dealing for the most part with that figmental phantasy, the "Balance of Nature". What this "balance" really amounts to can only be learned by a sojourn in an absolute wilderness unaffected by the influence of man; then one realizes what a scarcity of bird-life really is.

It is difficult to write with moderation of the activities of the lovers of predatory animals when one of one's closest friends faces absolute ruin, together with other sheep-ranchers, after years of effort, all on account of the estimable coyote; or when some of our most interesting birds such as the Sandhill Crane and Long-billed Curlew (which are never molested by man here) are on the very verge of extermination throughout the region, altogether due to coyotes and crows.

What you should do, my dear Grinnell, is to change your rapid peering habit of a Gnatcatcher to the careful intensive glare of a Canyon Wren into dark places,—and get a white patch on your throat to help you!—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, January 26, 1925.*

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

**BRITISH WADERS.** Illustrated in Water-Colour with Descriptive Notes. By E. C. ARNOLD. Demy 4to, pp. viii + 102, 51 colored plates; Cambridge University Press. Price £3-10s. net. (Limited edition of 50 signed and numbered copies on hand-made paper, of which 45 copies are for sale, £7-7s. net.)

The present volume is not a treatise on British Waders. It is primarily a collection of personal observations and is a record of remarkable achievement. Our author has remarks to make on 53 species of Limicolae, of which he has actually

collected no less than 29 and has narrowly missed securing a good many more. Many of his waders are great rarities on the British list and include the Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*) and the American Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*).

The usual detailed plumage descriptions are omitted, as the author considers them superfluous in a book of this kind, with so many excellent scientific manuals already available. The total length of each bird is given in the text. It seems a pity, however, that there is no index.

"Arnold's luck" is a phrase that I have several times heard in English bird circles, as though he were the most fortunate collector in the country. This has always struck me as being something of an injustice; for one only has to take a ramble with the author to realize that he deserves everything he gets. He knows his birds intimately; he is remarkably observant, highly appreciative of minute color differences, and forever on the watch for a strange movement, flight or note, and tireless in the pursuit of the unusual when he has found it. It is these things that make the successful collector, and not the luck that is so easily ascribed to him. A perusal of the pages is an incentive to improve one's own methods.

The greatest value in these notes lies in the emphasis laid on the salient features to be noticed in the field. Many of the species dealt with are practically cosmopolitan and turn up on both sides of the Atlantic from time to time. The notes, written as they are by an exceptionally able observer, therefore have considerable interest for those of us on this side who are also wader enthusiasts. There must be a good number of collectors even on this home continent of the Buff-breast who are still awaiting the first chance of a capture.

Many questions of interest to field workers are discussed. Among them may be mentioned the one most repeatedly referred to, When should a sight record be accepted and when should it not? As our author all too truly remarks, sight records are received with as much skepticism by the most ardent protectionists as by the most rabid collectors. The query would appear to be at least partially answered by such episodes as the author's first capture of a "Killdeer". He relates the incident in the following words. "A bird, obviously a Plover of sorts, rose suddenly from the grass with a slow flight that was new to me. It had a bright chestnut rump

and, had I missed it, I should have maintained all my life that I had missed a Killdeer. However, I hit, and, rushing up, found that I had slain an immature Grey Plover, whose white rump had been stained by the blood from a previous wound, which had apparently also affected its flight; it was the sort of occurrence which tends to make one lose faith in records of rare birds 'seen'."

To make adequate comment on the 51 color plates is a difficult task, for they are original in their interpretation and execution. One would certainly not mistake Arnold's work for that of any other artist. A few are open to honest criticism—inaccuracies of color and unconvincing attitudes. On the other hand, many of them are very exceptionally pleasing. It is refreshing to have a series of paintings of such a favorite group of birds from an original viewpoint, and so far removed from the usual stereotyped pattern. The author, who is not a professional artist, certainly deserves congratulations on the successful completion of a very big undertaking.

The book is most tastefully designed and flawless in its production.—WILLIAM ROWAN, *University of Alberta, Edmonton.*

SWANN'S "MONOGRAPH OF THE BIRDS OF PREY."\*—There is a great attraction in sumptuous books, in publications combining large size, broad page margins, beautiful illustrations and generally elaborate treatment. When the subject matter, too, is unusual in its appeal, and is technically well handled, such a work cannot fail of a cordial reception. Swann's "Monograph of the Birds of Prey" presents just this combination of pleasing appearance with authoritative systematic treatment. An added interest lies in the fact that this work deals with a group of birds that (save for the same author's "Synopsis of the Accipitres" of a few years ago) has not been accorded comprehensive treatment of any sort for many years, not since the publication in 1874 of volume I of the Catalogue of Birds of the British Museum.

The present monograph, judging from part one, leaves little to be desired so far as book-making is concerned. The finished

publication will assuredly form a beautiful set of books. The treatment, too, is for the most part satisfactory. The Introduction is in large part concerned with the characters and classification of the Accipitres, including a tabular arrangement of genera showing the distribution of species throughout the world. We also find therein a statement of the author's attitude toward the concepts of species and subspecies. He objects to the latter term, but merely as a term, preferring the word "form" instead. A critical mind might find some inconsistency between the author's expressed opinion "that each species is only a group of forms, neither one of which is a variety of the other", and, in the systematic accounts, the different typography he uses for the first "form" listed of each species, as compared with the others.

Nearly one-half of the Introduction is devoted to a dissertation upon falconry. Following the Introduction, the remainder of part one contains systematic accounts of the New World vultures and of about one-half of those of the Old World. There are five plates in this "part", all illustrations of exceptionally high grade; three of these illustrate in color five different species, one (also in color) figures the eggs of twelve different species, and one (photogravure) shows the nest of the Griffon Vulture.

The account of each species is prefixed by small-type paragraphs, including a synonymy with a fairly extensive list of references, statements of "distribution" and "characters", and descriptions of male, female and young, all concise and, for the most part, excellent. Following are one or two pages of general accounts, and it is here, I feel, that there are features that are open to criticism.

These paragraphs consist largely of quoted matter. This is inevitable, since no one man could be expected to have personal knowledge of all the species concerned; but the selections are not always carefully chosen. At any rate, this is the case in the one or two species with which I happen to be familiar. In the account of the California Condor the quotations are all from early writers, recording some inconsequential facts and some statements that have never been substantiated, while the careful work of later observers is all ignored. The statement that the Condor formerly nested in hollow trees is here twice repeated, unquestioningly, but it is doubtful if there is any sufficient ground for the belief.

\* A Monograph of the Birds of Prey (Order Accipitres) by H. Kirke Swann, F. Z. S., M. B. O. U. Corresponding Fellow of the Amer. Orn. Union. Illustrated by Plates reproduced in colour from drawings made expressly for this work by H. Gronvold, also Coloured Plates of Eggs, and Photogravure Plates. London: Wheldon & Wesley, Ltd., 2, 3, & 4 Arthur Street, New Oxford Street, W. C. 2. Part I. November 15, 1924. Pp. 1-xi + 1-52, five plates (unnumbered). Price 26s. net.