work of a veteran observer, who, if not a prolific writer, has nevertheless maintained his interest in ornithology for a quarter of a century, in the light of which experience he now treats of the birds of Ontario. Mr. McIlwraith was in the field in 1860 and 1861, when he published* notices of the birds of Hamilton, afterwards systematized in a 'List of Birds observed near Hamilton, Canada West'†, noting 241 species as a result of ten years' observation. This present work is the outcome of an address 'On Birds and Bird Matters' delivered before the Hamilton Association April 2, 1885, when the author promised to prepare a freely-annotated list of the birds of that locality. He was then busy in hunting up Canadian observers for the Migration Committee of the A. O. U., and in position to sound the depths of the ignorance of ornithology among persons fairly well informed on things in general. In due process of evolution the matter took the present shape of a systematic manual of the subject, such as would enable any one to identify the birds that should be met with in Ontario. The Hamilton Association published the address in their 'Proceedings' of one year, and the history of each species the next, the present volume being the result.

The work treats formally of upwards of 250 species (as we judge, without actually counting them), giving first a concise technical description, then the general habitat, and a formal statement of the nest and eggs, followed by local biographical items. Such a work cannot fail to prove of interest and usefulness. It places Canadian Ornithology more nearly *au courant* with the progress of the science in other parts of America, and easily advances its author to the first place in his own field. We could wish it wore a more attractive face typographically, but the sad printing, perhaps unavoidable under the circumstances, lessens the value of no scientific facts which the book presents.—E. C.

McIlwraith's Birds of Ontario.—At the request of a few of the prominent members of the A. O. U., I have prepared the following notes concerning the 'Birds of Ontario', by Thos. McIlwraith, Hamilton, Ont., pointing out and correcting some errors which have occurred in that work.

The eggs of the Bob-white are described as pure white, no mention being made of the characteristic stains of light buff which are almost invariably found.

Those of the Ruffed Grouse are buff, not cream-color, as stated.

The Marsh Hawk is said to lay white eggs "blotched or speckled with brown," but in reality its eggs are nearly always pure white, sometimes with a few spots, but probably never blotched.

Those of the Baltimore Oriole are stated to be "white, faintly tinged with blue," but no mention is made of the lilac, brown, and black spots and streakings which render this egg one of the most beautiful we have in Ontario.

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* Canad. Nat., V, 1860, pp. 387-396; VI, 1861, pp. 6-18, 129-138.

† Proc. (Comm.) Essex Inst., V, 1866, pp. 79-96.

The Red-eyed Vireo is stated to lay eggs "white .... sometimes .... a few dark spots towards the larger end." These eggs are *always* thinly spotted with black and dark brown.

The white ground color of the eggs of the Redstart is called grayish-white, to which color these eggs can lay no claim whatever.

Loon's eggs are described as "dull greenish-yellow with numerous spots of brown," while they are olivaceous brown sparingly spotted with dark brown.

The number of eggs in a set is frequently misstated, as for instance the Vesper Sparrow and the Chippy both have "Eggs, 4 to 6." In each case 3 to 4 would be more correct, five being extremely rare, and six have probably never been found in Ontario.

The nests and nesting sites are wrong in several instances, the two Grebes, Horned and Carolina, being said to lay on the "bog," the latter making a nest of "a few matted rushes on the bog." Mr. J. A. Morden and myself have examined many nests of the Carolina and some of the Horned Grebe, and can say positively that both of them build a large nest of rushes which reaches nearly or quite to the ground, and is surrounded with water from six to twelve inches deep, the nests being generally placed where the surrounding rushes are thin, so that the young have easy access to water.

"Nest, if any, in a hollow tree or cleft of rock" is accredited to the Great Horned Owl. Almost invariably they use a nest similar to that of the Red-tailed Hawk, no instance having yet come under my notice where it has used a hollow tree or cleft of rock.

Speaking of the Pewee, no mention is made of its nesting among the roots of a fallen tree, where probably half the nests in Ontario are made, this bird being quite common in the woods and numerous nests having been found in that position.

The American Merganser is stated to be "never plentiful." On the inland waters near London it is by far the most common of the Mergansers.

A lamentable error has occurred with the two White Herons, *Ardea egretta* and *A. candidissima*, the titles having evidently been misplaced. That this should have occurred seems almost impossible, but is proved by the fact the description, abundance, and even the repeated name under the heading "American Egret" belong to the Snowy Heron, and *vice versa*.

There are two instances given of the capture of the Yellow Rail in Ontario, and it is left to be inferred that those constitute its sole occurrence here. From a number of specimens taken in the marshes near the west end of Ontario I conclude that it is regular though quite rare.

The Curlew is stated to be "occasionally seen .... as an irregular visitor and not in large numbers." In suitable places it occurs regularly and in considerable numbers, and on May 24 and 25, 1887, I saw hundreds at Rondeau, where they are probably as common as anywhere on our shores.

The Pileated Woodpecker is relegated to Muskoka, except for mention of one pair which were found nesting in Middlesex County, whereas they are rather common in most of the heavy timber in the western counties, where they breed.

Both the Cowbird and the Baltimore Oriole are stated to disappear from Southern Ontario in July and August, this being noted as a strange peculiarity of these birds. A little inquiry would have disproved these ideas, as both birds are common around London through both months, and also probably in all Southern Ontario, where they breed plentifully.

The date of arrival is often wrong, for instance, the Vesper Sparrow and Chippy being credited with arriving about the end of April. My average date of arrival for a number of years, for the Vesper Sparrow is April 10, for the Chippy April 20, while for the Towhee and Field Sparrow, which are stated to arrive about the first of May, my average is April 10 and 22, respectively, the former sometimes coming late in March while snow is yet to be found.

The Grasshopper Sparrow, though stated to be casual and very rare, I have no doubt breeds in the southwest of Ontario, where I have found it in different localities, notably at Point Pelee, where it was heard singing every day in early June, and was comparatively common.

Mr. McIlwraith refers to me as the sole evidence of the occurrence of the Rough-winged Swallow, and makes the statement that I have found it breeding for the past year or two; while in 1882, in the Morden-Saunders list of the birds of Western Ontario, we stated that it "breeds in same localities as the last" (Bank Swallow), and I have found it common within a radius of twenty-five miles around London in all suitable places. He follows the reference to me by stating, "nests having been found in crevices of rocks and on beams under bridges," etc., from which one might infer that such are its habits in Ontario. This, however, is not the case, as in the large number of nests I have examined all were in holes in banks, and I have never seen these Swallows frequenting bridges at all, but always near sandbanks; and we have no rocks.

Speaking of the Black-poll Warbler, the statement is made, "The musical powers .... are not exercised in this latitude." In contradiction to this, I have never yet seen or taken a male in spring except those I have found by their song.

The Water-Thrush is said to be "quite as abundant throughout the country" as the Ovenbird, which, for the west at least, is a great error. The Ovenbird is abundant, while the Water-Thrush is not at all common, being found in almost exactly the same numbers as the Louisana Water-Thrush, but in my experience the localities frequented by the two species are exactly opposite to those stated, the Water-Thrush never being far from water, often being on the very banks of streams, while the other is found in moist high woods, water being apparently no requisite for its happiness.

With regard to the Olive-backed and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, the ratio of specimens obtained by me has been three Gray-cheeked to one Olive-

backed, which latter I have taken while singing, contrary to the statement made that while here they have only a low, soft call-note.

That so large a number of errors should have crept in is to be deplored, especially as many seem to be easily avoidable, but that the work will be of the greatest service to the class for whom it is intended cannot be doubted, many ornithologically-inclined friends having inquired anxiously for its appearance, as it was just what they needed to aid them in the study of our birds.—W. E. SAUNDERS.

Stejneger on the Species of Pardalotus.*—This paper relates especially to the forms recognized by Mr. Sharpe (Cat. Bds. Brit. Mus., X, 1885, p. 54) as *Pardalotus ornatus*, *P. assimilis*, and *P. affinis*, *assimilis* being here considered as a subspecies of *affinis*. A 'Key to the Species' of this genus is appended, of which eight and one subspecies are recognized, seven of which are represented in the collection of the National Museum.—J. A. A.

Stejneger on Two European Thrushes.—Dr. Stejneger, in a paper† of eight pages, maintains the existence in Europe of two species of Ring-Ouzel, namely, the 'Northern Ring-Ouzel' (*Turdus torquatus* auct.), and the 'Alpine Ring-Ouzel' (*Turdus alpestris* Brehm); the first a northern-breeding bird, migrating south in winter; the other supposed to breed in the high mountains of Central and Southern Europe. The two forms occur together in winter, and have been hitherto confounded by nearly all writers, although well distinguished by Brehm. He says: "It has been the unfortunate fashion to sneer at the species and subspecies of Brehm, and the simple fact that a name was established by him has been sufficient reason to ignore it altogether and to put it into the synonymy without further investigation. This is not only injustice to Brehm's honest labor and his extreme power of discrimination, but it has resulted in absolute injury to science."—J. A. A.

Stejneger on Japanese Birds.—In the 'Proceedings' of the U. S. National Museum Dr. Stejneger continues his 'Review of Japanese Birds,'‡ Part II treating of the 'Tits and Nuthatches,' and Part III of the 'Rails, Gallinules, and Coots.' In the first paper six species of *Parus* are recognized, two of *Ægithalos*, one of *Remiza* (gen. nov.), and one of *Sitta*, with two additional subspecies, one of which (*Sitta amurensis clara*) is described as new. Synopses are given of the genera and species, the synonymy is

* Notes on Species of the Australian Genus Pardalotus. By Leonhard Stejneger. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1866, pp. 294-296. (Dated Oct. 19, 1886; received by the reviewer Feb. 14, 1887.)

† On Turdus alpestris and Turdus torquatus, two distinct species of European Thrushes. By Leonhard Stejneger. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1886, pp. 365–373. (Dated Oct. 30, 1886; received by the reviewer Feb. 14, 1887.)

‡ Review of Japanese Birds. By Leonard Stejneger. II.—Tits and Nuthatches. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1886, pp. 374-394. III. Rails, Gallinules, and Coots. *Ibid.*, pp. 395-408. (Dated "Oct. 20, 1886"; received by the reviewer Feb. 14, 1887.)