

a competent observer, but quite capable of imparting to his readers the many bits of bird lore he gathers with so much zest from wood and field. The book properly closes with a good index.

Mr. Parkhurst's book¹ is much in the same vein, but rather more methodical in plan. Mr. Parkhurst's field is Central Park, New York City, and his book is "an informal diary of a year's observations" made chiefly "in that small section known as 'The Ramble' covering only about one-sixteenth of a square mile." The "observations," however, form really but a small part of the book, since they are made as it were the thread upon which he hangs an extensive array of general facts about bird life, such as would be most likely to interest the inexperienced but eager student of birds in their haunts. We find him rarely tripping in his general statements, while his observations on Central Park birds show him to be a careful field student, whose pleasantly told experiences must entice many of our city folk, who feel a longing for contact with living nature, to share his rambles. His book opens with a 'Prelude,' followed by chapters which bear simply the names of the months of the year, from January to December. It concludes with a 'Postlude' and an excellent index. The 'Postlude' gives a list of the 94 species met with, as a summary of his year's observations, which contain many facts of interest to ornithologists as well as to the lay reader. His style is attractive, and he has a way of 'putting things' that prevents his pages from becoming monotonous, as might easily prove the case with such a subject.

A feature of special interest to ornithologists is the illustrations, since they afford an indication of the possibilities of photography as a means of illustration in bird books. They are nicely executed 'process' plates, made from photographs of stuffed birds, with appropriate natural surroundings, the birds being from specimens in the 'Local Collection' of birds in the American Museum of Natural History; the pieces were designed and photographed by Mr. John Rowley, Jr., Chief of the Department of Taxidermy at the Museum.—J. A. A.

'The Birds About Us.'²—This is the latest of Dr. Abbott's charmingly written books on popular Natural History. In the present volume it has been the author's aim to treat briefly in systematic order of the more common birds of the United States—more especially of the Delaware Valley. The species are not treated under separate headings but we pass directly from one to another, ten to twenty being considered in each chapter. The characteristic habits of each bird are set forth in the

¹The Birds' Calendar | By | H. E. Parkhurst | . . . [= 2 lines from Wordsworth] Illustrated | New York | Charles Scribner's Sons | 1894. 12mo., pp. viii + 351, with 24 full-page process plates.

²The Birds About Us. By Charles Conrad Abbott, M. D. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1895. 12mo., pp. 288.

author's well known style, interspersed with sketches of nature and extensive quotations from Wilson, Audubon, Nuttall, and many other writers, which together make a book that cannot fail to prove most attractive to the reader who possesses any appreciation for nature, while the facts recorded are in the main scientifically accurate.

Dr. Abbott very justly calls to account the careless sportsman, the "loafers" and plume hunters, who are responsible for the scarcity of many of our birds which were formerly abundant, and "silly women" who wear birds in their hats also come in for their share of censure. It is the "professional ornithologist," however, against whom Dr. Abbott is especially and unjustly severe. He says of their work: "To realize what bird life is we must do a great deal more than merely collect the creatures and measure the thousandth of an inch of their hind toes." "There has been too much collecting by far that has yielded nothing worth the knowing. It is not justifiable to kill one hundred warblers in a day just to see if a particular one is among them. There is nothing to be gained in determining that there are possible hybrids, or, it may be, an overlooked good species in a given area. Let what we do not know go unknown until discovered by accident and let the birds live." Strange advice surely from any one who pretends to believe in scientific investigation! And if Dr. Abbott thinks that professional ornithologists are accustomed to slaughter all the birds to be found in a given area in order to determine what species occur there, he certainly has not a very close acquaintance with those whom he criticises. Professional ornithologists have just as much respect for bird life as has Dr. Abbott and do not sacrifice any more birds than are necessary for scientific study.

Our author further states that "the plea for collecting is worn threadbare"; and concerning the habits and anatomy of birds, "all needed information can be had from scores of books." "What we now want to know about birds does not call for a shot-gun. Our museums are overstocked and the amateur collector is a nuisance." Ornithologists will scarcely agree with the above, as there are many questions regarding bird anatomy, structure, and coloration of feathers, which have yet to be solved and upon which the books give us little or no information. And as to amateur collecting, beginners in the study must collect specimens to aid them in their work and to enable them to properly identify the birds that they see. Had Dr. Abbott used a gun a little more and been certain of the identity of the birds of which he wrote he would have been spared the publication of many remarkable statements which appeared in some of his earlier works, and which he himself seems now to admit as errors, as they do not appear in 'Birds About Us.' He still, however, insists on the breeding of the Solitary Sandpiper at Trenton, N. J., and says that "it is foolish for theoretical ornithologists to dispute such statements." In view, however, of the position he now takes regarding some of his other remarkable statements, we may be pardoned for differing from this opinion.

'Birds About Us' is illustrated by 24 half-tone plates, partly reproductions from Audubon and Wilson and partly from mounted groups in the collection of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences — for which by the way the author makes no acknowledgment whatever. There are also a number of woodcuts, generally copied from Wilson, and for the most part so rough as to spoil the appearance of an otherwise handsome piece of typographical work. — W. S.

Chapman's List of the Birds of the Vicinity of New York City.¹
— Masquerading as a museum guide, a local list of such excellence has been laid before the public that its most obvious shortcomings are the result of an endeavor to please, at the same time, two classes of readers, the museum visitor and the ornithologist. As a consequence it leaves much to be desired by both; one has a dictionary of information thrust upon him instead of a primer, and the other grows at the superfluous illustrations and the references to alcoves and cases. The pamphlet consists of three parts, a brief introduction, an annotated list, and a short bibliography. The reviewer is placed at a great disadvantage for he is obliged to assume a dual rôle. As a visitor he finds the guide confusingly replete with scientific information. In the introduction the birds are nicely fitted into groups of "permanent residents," "summer visitants," etc., but there is no hint that the same species may equally well belong to several of these groups; and when he looks further into the list he finds "migrants," "fall migrants," and "spring migrants," — groups to which apparently no reference has been made. Any one of ordinary intelligence will discover that these terms are synonymous with "regular transient visitants," but in a guide nothing should be taken for granted.

From an ornithologist's standpoint the list is most acceptable, and acquires a particular interest from the fact that it is the first complete list of the birds of the vicinity of New York City that has appeared since that of Mr. Geo. N. Lawrence in 1866. It therefore deserves careful scrutiny and comparison with this list rather than with others of more limited scope. Mr. Lawrence's 327 species have been increased to 348 by Mr. Chapman. Introduced and extinct species are not numbered as part of the list, but incongruously appear in the same type used for it. Besides, such species as *Camptolaimus labradorius* and *Tympanuchus americanus* ought to have been treated alike. Aside from mere synonyms, Mr. Chapman omits without comment the following birds given by Mr. Lawrence, viz.: "*Turdus* [= *Hesperocichla*] *noveboracensis*," "*Puffinus*

¹ Visitor's Guide to the Local Collection of Birds in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. With an Annotated List of the Birds known to occur within fifty miles of New York City. By Frank M. Chapman, Assistant Curator Department of Mammalogy and Ornithology. New York: Printed for the Museum. 1894. 8vo., pp. 1-100, with pl. iv and cuts in text.