

Jamaica, which have previously been reviewed.<sup>1</sup> Mr. D. W. May in an article<sup>2</sup> on Cattle in the West Indies, mentions a blackbird of Porto Rico that follows the cattle about and picks the ticks off of them. He says: "I have seen them grasping the tail with both feet and feeding upon the ticks infesting the hind quarters of the animal. They will also stand upon the ground beneath the animal and jump up picking ticks, getting one at each hop. To this bird is largely due the fact that in our fields ticks are not so plentiful as in the Southern States." This bird undoubtedly is *Quiscalus brachypterus*, the species mentioned by Bowditch<sup>3</sup> as feeding on vermin on cattle near Mayaguez.—W. L. M.

**Grinnell on 'The Linnet of the Hawaiian Islands.'**<sup>4</sup>—The paper is an important discussion of color as found in the *Carpodacus mexicanus* group of birds, and the principal facts on which it is based are summarized in the following quotation: "A series of male Linnets collected in the Hawaiian Islands in 1910 are all of the yellow or orange type of coloration. The Linnet of the Hawaiian Islands is known to be of exotic origin. It is believed to have been introduced less than forty years ago, the imported individuals having been obtained in the vicinity of San Francisco, California, where the common *red* type is known to have prevailed ever since birds have been observed in the region, a period of sixty years at least."

For an explanation of the color variations, the author inclines to the latest biological theories as shown by citation of another paragraph, viz.: "A deficiency in capacity, of the germ, for the formation of the appropriate enzyme may have been intensified through close breeding until the condition was reached where the amount of enzyme produced in the feather anlage is insufficient to carry on oxidation of tyrosin beyond the yellow, or at farthest, the orange stage." He admits that "the explanation offered is tentative to the last degree," but what is more surprising is that he virtually excludes food as a possible factor in producing these results.—J. D., Jr.

**Grinnell on 'The Modesto Song Sparrow.'**<sup>5</sup>—If this new form, *Melospiza melodia mailliardi*, takes rank with its predecessors it will bring the number of recognized races up to twenty-one. The form *heermanni* once occupied alone the central valleys of California, where now there are several aspirants of which this is the newest.—J. D., Jr.

<sup>1</sup> Auk, XXVIII, Jan., 1911, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Porto Rico Hort. News, III, No. 4, April, 1910, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Auk, XX, Jan., 1903, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> The Linnet of the Hawaiian Islands: A Problem in Speciation. By Joseph Grinnell, Univ. of California Pub. in Zoöl., Vol. VII, No. 4, pp. 179-195.

<sup>5</sup> The Modesto Song Sparrow. By Joseph Grinnell. Univ. of California Pub. in Zoöl., Vol. VII, No. 5, pp. 197-199.