

natural history of Labrador, has edited a reprint of the journal of Captain George Cartwright the famous explorer of this interesting but inhospitable coast. The original edition of the journal published in 1792 is a very scarce work and is inaccessible to most readers, so that Dr. Townsend's reprint is exceedingly welcome, placing at our disposal a vast amount of accurate and interesting information concerning Labrador and its natural history, one hundred and thirty years ago. The text is preserved without change except for the omission of "unimportant details and the mass of repetition," while in foot-notes the editor has given us the current technical names of the animals and plants which are referred to and as a foreword has furnished an entertaining biographical sketch of Captain Cartwright.

Most striking among the numerous allusions to birds are the references to the Great Auk or 'Penguin' the most extended of which treats of its threatened extermination on Funk Island, where in 1785 the inhabitants of Fogo went with their boats for birds and eggs. "They lay their gangboards from the gunwale of the boat to the rocks, and then drive as many penguins on board, as she will hold.... It has been customary of late years, for several crews of men to live all the summer on that island, for the sole purpose of killing birds for the sake of their feathers, the destruction which they have made is incredible. If a stop is not soon put to that practice, the whole breed will be diminished to almost nothing, particularly the penguins: for this is now the only island they have left to breed upon."

Captain Cartwright's respect for accuracy in describing the habits of birds and mammals is conspicuous, the more so because it is unusual in explorers of his time, and this trait as well as his sense of humor are well shown in his extended account of the Beaver which he begins as follows: "I tremble at seeing myself under the necessity of contradicting that celebrated natural historian Compt de Buffon; yet I must take the liberty to do it. He says, 'A beaver has a scaly tail, because he eats fish.' I wonder much that Monsieur Buffon had not one himself for the same reason; for I am sure that he has eaten a great deal more fish, than all the beavers in the world put together."

All naturalists especially ornithologists and mammalogists will find this volume exceedingly interesting reading and a valuable work of reference.—W. S.

Taylor on Birds of Northern Humboldt County, Nevada.—In an interesting report¹ Mr. Walter P. Taylor describes a field trip made by himself and Mr. Charles H. Richardson, Jr. in the Pine Forest Mountain region of Nevada May 10–August 10, 1909.

¹ Field Notes on Amphibians, Reptiles and Birds of Northern Humboldt County, Nevada; with a discussion of some of the Faunal Features of the Region. By Walter P. Taylor. University of California Publications in Zoölogy, Vol. VII, No. 10, pp. 319–436. February 14, 1912.

Careful descriptions of the localities visited are given, with lists of the more conspicuous plants, while the life zones and their characteristic species of vertebrates are thoroughly discussed. The annotated list of birds numbers 103 species, and considerable space is allotted to accounts of the habits of those which are most abundant and characteristic. To quote the author, the attempt has been made to place emphasis upon the non-morphological or psychological characters of the species which are of late attracting more and more attention in zoological field work.

In addition to the birds, the reptiles and amphibians of the region are treated in this paper, the mammals having formed the subject of a previous contribution. Taken together they form a comprehensive biological survey of this interesting portion of Nevada, with much valuable information upon the life histories of the birds.— W. S.

Swarth, on A Collection of Birds from Vancouver Island.¹—

An expedition was organized and financed by Miss Annie M. Alexander in 1910 in the interests of the University of California for the purpose of collecting the higher vertebrates of Vancouver Island. Miss Alexander, Miss Louise Kellogg, Mr. Harry S. Swarth and Mr. E. Despard made up the party and Mr. Swarth here presents us with a detailed account of the localities visited and a discussion of the distribution and relationship of the birds and mammals, the former comprising 111 species.

Several Pine Grosbeaks were observed on July 15 and a male in juvenal plumage was secured showing pretty conclusively that a form of this bird which Mr. Swarth refers provisionally to *Pinicola enucleator flammula* breeds on the island.

The extensive material obtained made possible a careful study of the affinities of the Vancouver representatives of several species which has led to interesting results. The Savannah Sparrow is found to be 'widely different' from *Passerculus s. alaudinus* and 'practically indistinguishable' from *P. s. savanna* of eastern North America. The Nighthawk too, is the eastern form *Chordeiles v. virginianus* and the Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra minor*, while the Junco is *J. h. oregonus*. In a large series of Song Sparrows from Vancouver and southern Alaska Mr. Swarth fails to "perceive the differences supposedly distinguishing *morphna* from *rufina*," while the Northwest Crow is treated as a subspecies of *C. brachyrhynchus*.

Certain forms not recognized in the A. O. U. Check-List are held to be valid as *Hirundo erythrogastra palmeri*, *Dendroica aestiva hooveri*, *Ceryle alcyon caurina*, and *Geothlypis trichas scirpicola* while certain differences are noted in the vernacular names. A strong plea too is made for the restriction of the name *ruber* to the northern instead of the southern form of Red-breasted Sapsucker, which deserves careful consideration. Indeed

¹ Report on a Collection of Birds and Mammals from Vancouver Island. By Harry S. Swarth. University of California Publications in Zoology, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1-124, pll. 1-4. February 13, 1912.