

This book will doubtless be read with interest and profit by the increasing army of bird students who follow their hobby with the aid of the camera.—
W. S.

Payne's 'The Baltimore Oriole.'—This handsomely printed little book,¹ which has about it the appearance of authority, unfortunately contains so many misquotations and pieces of misinformation that one wonders how it could have been compiled in these days of accurate ornithological knowledge.

From the astonishing Canary-colored Oriole of the frontispiece and cover, to the sketch of Audubon based on the antiquated and discredited life by Buchanan, errors are numerous. The author has apparently never heard of Herrick's life of Audubon and the extracts from Audubon regarding the Oriole, although enclosed in quotation marks, are unfortunately not verbatim and are often pieced together. Moreover the great ornithologist is made to say that the birds "attain the full beauty of their plumage before the first winter" whereas as a matter of fact he says the "plumage is not mature until the third spring." The latter part of the remarkable statement "They lay 4-6 eggs and in the far south *near two brooks*" proves to be, when the original is consulted, "and in Louisiana *rear two broods.*"

These and other quotations are, we are informed, taken from the "Elephantine Edition" and we learn that the economic value of the Oriole was "demonstrated scientifically by the admirable Biological Survey made by the Government in the Department of Agriculture." [!]

Why do not publishers consult some competent ornithologist and have such works properly revised before launching them upon the public?—
W. S.

Johnston's 'Birds of West Virginia.'—The West Virginia Department of Agriculture has issued an attractive book² on the birds of the state by the state ornithologist, I. H. Johnston. The main text consists of accounts of forty of the best known species covering nesting, range, food and general habits. Each one is illustrated by a figure in colors from paintings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes printed as inserts in the text. While these are excellent portraits of the birds the printer has unfortunately in several cases gotten the colors out of register so that a blurred effect is produced like a lantern slide out of focus, which is most unfortunate.

The text that the author has furnished is fully up to the requirements and is followed by a nominal list of all the birds of the state to which is added a general account of the economic value of birds with methods of attracting them, suggestions for bird study in the schools and a chapter

¹ The Baltimore Oriole and a Biographical Sketch of Audubon. By Raphael Semmes Payne, Baltimore. The Norman, Remington Company. MCMXXIII. pp. 1-55. Price \$1.00.

² Birds of West Virginia. Their Economic Value and Aesthetic Beauty. 1923. I. H. Johnston, State Ornithologist. Compiled and Published by State Department of Agriculture, Charleston. J. H. Stewart, Commissioner. pp. 1-138 (140).

on the methods and possibilities of bird banding, several migration records and a bibliography. The domestic cat comes in for just censure and it is such evidence and publicity as are here given that will ultimately break down the prejudice in favor of cats and permit us to pass laws to prevent their free roving and so eliminate one of the worst menaces to wild bird life. Mr. Johnston is to be congratulated upon an admirable piece of work.—W. S.

Eliot's 'Birds of the Pacific Coast.'—This little volume¹ is intended to serve the purpose of a popular handbook for those who have but limited time for outdoor study and desire a short cut to a knowledge of the common birds of the woods and fields.

It consists of colored figures of all of the 118 species treated, with brief accounts of their habits and habitats and a concise statement of distribution and sometimes of coloration, the length, in inches, of each species being given immediately after the name. Allied subspecies are mentioned in the text usually without description, and unfortunately referred to as "species."

The work would seem to answer the purpose for which it is intended quite well and will doubtless aid many a beginner to a knowledge of the common birds of the "Coast", but we are sorry that fuller descriptions could not have been given especially in the case of such birds as the Sharp-shinned Hawk and others where the adult only is figured and described, whereas many specimens encountered will probably be immature. Mention of the best field characters could also have been added with advantage, the trouble with most of our popular books being that the descriptions are of specimens in hand whereas the student wants the characters of the live bird at some distance. A nominal list of all the birds of the Pacific Coast is added with the states in which each occurs.

The nomenclature throughout wisely follows the A. O. U. 'Check-List' but unfortunately the sequence of species follows "a whimsical plan" of the author's without regard to their proper order. This is regrettable as those who use the book will later secure a more advanced work and be bewildered to find the order with which they have become familiar completely upset.

The author's plan to pick out the most familiar birds has been well carried out and the work therefore deals mainly with the Passeres and "Picariae" with a few birds of prey, gallinaceous and aquatic species. The plates by Bruce Horsfall vary much in artistic merit but are mainly quite satisfactory for purposes of identification although owing to careless printing the colors in a number of instances are off register and produce

¹ *Birds of the Pacific Coast*. Including a brief account of the distribution and habitat of one hundred and eighteen birds that are more or less common to the Pacific Coast states and British Columbia, many of which are found eastward to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. By Willard Ayres Eliot. With fifty-six color plates by R. Bruce Horsfall. G. W. Putnam's Sons. The Knickerbocker Press. New York and London. 1923. pp. i-xvii + 1-211. Price \$3.50.