

RECENT LITERATURE.

Holt on the Great White and Würdemann's Herons. This paper,¹ which, by the way, won the Walker prize in Ornithology awarded by the Boston Society of Natural History, discusses at length the much debated problem of the Great White and Great Blue Herons of Florida. Mr. Holt, as a member of the Crile Florida Expedition of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, had exceptional opportunities for the study of these birds on the Florida Keys in December 1923, and January 1924, which adds very materially to the value of his deductions from an examination of specimens and literature.

Ardea wardi, he, like other recent writers, regards as the Florida race of the Great Blue Heron, while *A. occidentalis* is considered to be a perfectly distinct species, and *A. würdemanni*, a hybrid between the two. He shows that the occipital plumes of *occidentalis* are either much reduced as compared with those of *A. h. wardi* or are absent entirely, and when present are of a different form. There are also other slight differences. He finds too that blue and white young of *würdemanni* in the same nest are the exception, and that such occurrences, as well as almost all the occurrences of *A. würdemanni*, are in the district where the ranges of *occidentalis* and *wardi* overlap.

He does not regard the blue and white phases of the Little Blue Heron as at all comparable to the Great White and Ward's Herons since the white phase of this species is almost certainly a condition of youth, and furthermore no blue young of the Little Blue has ever been found.

Some admirable photographs of the nests of the Great White Heron are reproduced as illustrations.

We heartily agree with Mr. Holt's conclusions and feel that very convincing and surprising evidence will be required to overthrow them.—
W. S.

Boyson's 'Falkland Islands.'²—An important reference book which contains many valuable observations on birds but which has apparently not been reviewed either in 'The Auk' or 'The Ibis,' is a volume on the Falkland Islands which appeared in 1924. This well illustrated hand book is divided into four parts: Pt. I, History, pp. 13-191; Pt. II, Industries, pp. 193-243; Pt. III, Geographical Notes, pp. 245-279; Pt. IV, Zoology, pp. 281-382, followed by an appendix containing Statistics, pp. 383-398, and an Index.

¹ The Status of the Great White Heron (*Ardea occidentalis* Audubon) and Würdemann's Heron (*Ardea würdemanni* Baird). By Ernest G. Holt. Sci. Publ. Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 1-35, pls. I-VI. July 28, 1928.

² The Falkland Islands | by V. F. Boyson | with Notes on the Natural History | by Rupert Vallentin | Oxford | at the Clarendon Press | 1924. 8vo., pp. i-xii, 2 leaves, [13]-414, 34 plates and map.

The section of most interest in this connection is that relating to birds on pp. 285 to 335, based on the field observations of Rupert Vallentin who made three visits to the islands remaining five months in 1897-98, the season of 1901-02 and two years beginning in 1909—much of the time during the last trip an West Falkland. The list of birds includes 35 species of which only 8 are land birds. One of the latter, the Turkey Buzzard (*Cathartes falklandica*) is unfortunately becoming rapidly extinct owing to the constant warfare waged upon it. Many interesting notes are given on the three species of Penguins, the King (*Aptenodytes patagonica*), the Gentoo (*Pygoscelis taeniata*), and the Rockhopper (*Catarrhactes chrysocome*).

The principal industry of the islands is sheep raising which has caused a marked change in the vegetation and great diminution in some of the birds. It is said that in 1903 there was considerable agitation for the destruction each year of 150,000 Upland Geese (*Chloephaga magellanica*), which were estimated to consume grass enough for 20,000 sheep. As a result of this demand "An Ordinance for the Destruction of Geese was passed, the number of beaks to be purchased during the first year being for the East Falklands 50,000, for the West Falklands 37,500 (p. 210). Although most of the other birds are protected by law Upland Geese apparently are not as yet protected even during the breeding season.

Readers who are interested in the resources and natural history of this remote southern colony will be well repaid by a perusal of this volume.
—T. S. P.

Thompson's 'Aunt Chloe and Her Birds.'¹—There is something about the negro dialect that fascinates children and the Uncle Remus stories have held the attention of several generations, nor do the children tire of them after they have ceased to be children.

Mr. Thompson has taken this method of presenting his bird stories and has done so most successfully. He has evidently studied the dialect carefully and has reproduced it with great accuracy. Aunt Chloe, well versed in the habits of wild creatures, entertains a group of girls from the city with the life histories of the Baltimore Oriole, the Catbird, the Cardinal, the Crane, the Blue Jay—"dat bird o' satan,"—Cowbird and Cuckoos, English Sparrow, Turtle Dove and Crow, while there are also chapters on the song bird strike and a bird convention.

Mr. Thompson cleverly endows Aunt Chloe with knowledge of the latest reports of the Biological Survey and the Audubon Societies so that much valuable information is instilled into the minds of the young readers which through a more direct medium would be dry and uninteresting.

The most attractive sketches however are those which include some of the traditions and folk lore of the negroes. The old Crane [Heron],

¹ Aunt Chloe and Her Birds. By William Edgar Thompson. Second edition revised and enlarged, with eight full pages in color and many pen and ink sketches. Price \$2.00. William Edgar Thompson, Bedford, Virginia. 1928. pp. 1-208.