

statement that we do find but without mention of authority is that "in 1816, encouraged by his friend Alexander Wilson who promised to help him, he projected a work on American entomology." Any "encouragement" by the ornithologist at this date we are inclined to question since Wilson had died in 1813. However these matters do not in any way detract from the value or charm of the biography. Ornithologists know what Say contributed to their science and realize that ornithology was but a minor factor in his life, but they will be deeply interested in the history of this remarkable man and his associates and of the times in which they lived. The volume is admirably written, well gotten up, and illustrated by a number of portraits and historical scenes.—W. S.

**Oliver's 'New Zealand Birds.'**—Probably all of the members of the A. O. U. who listened to Mr. Cope's enthusiastic account of his sojourn in New Zealand, at the Salem meeting of the Union, were filled with a desire to visit this far off land, to share the hospitality which he described and to make the acquaintance of the unique avifauna of the islands.

To those who contemplate making the trip Mr. Oliver's admirable volume<sup>1</sup> on the birds of the Dominion will prove an invaluable companion while those who must forego the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with this fascinating land may still become familiar with its bird life through the same medium.

While there have been expensive illustrated works on New Zealand birds there has been no publication comparable with Mr. Oliver's. In it we have an up-to-date handbook giving us in readable form just the information that we desire. After the name of each bird there is a brief history of the discovery of the species and other general facts relating to it; then a description of adult and young, forms (subspecies) and mutants (phases or abnormalities); a paragraph on its eggs and another on distribution, both in New Zealand and elsewhere; and finally its habits and relation to man. A supplementary note contains references, beginning with the original description and type locality. Extinct species are considered along with the living and there are six color plates by L. A. Doff, apparently from mounted specimens, and numerous text figures largely from photographs.

We learn from the account of the interesting Kea Parrot that only some individuals attack sheep and that the habit apparently arose from the birds having tasted meat by feeding on dead sheep or on refuse meat thrown out on the ground. Where such meat is not available the birds return to their normal vegetable and insect diet and the desire for meat is lost, as is usual in a habit so recently acquired.

Of the Apteryx or Kiwi four species are recognized, three from the South Island and one from the North. The first Kiwi brought to Europe was obtained by Capt. Barclay about 1813 and was the South Island form known as the Tokoeka. The fourth species *A. haastii* was not discovered

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Birds. By W. R. B. Oliver, Director Dominion Museum. Wellington. Fine Arts (N. Z.) Ltd., 1930. Pp. i-viii + 1-541. Price 30 shillings.

until 1871. No less than twenty-two species of the extinct Moas are recognized referred to five genera. Moa gizzard stones, four perfect eggs and pieces of skin with feathers and muscles attached have been discovered and the evidence is clear that they were killed in numbers and cooked for food by the Maoris after they reached the islands and to this slaughter is attributed the apparently rapid extermination of the great birds.

Since the settlement of the country by Europeans twenty-three species of birds have either become extinct or have been greatly reduced in numbers. As a factor in this the introduction of foreign birds is to be considered and America would do well to seriously take heed of the effect of the enormous increase in the numbers of the European Starling and the consequent disappearance of our native species where the foreigner is most strongly entrenched. If this species is not held in check some of our native American birds will go the way of the New Zealand forms.

Where fields and plantations replace native forest in New Zealand, we learn that European, Australian and Asiatic birds meet the eye on all hands and here and there only is a native species to be seen. Mr. Oliver is to be congratulated upon his excellent book which should be in every ornithological library describing as it does one of the most interesting bird faunas to be found anywhere in the world.—W. S.

**Baerg's 'Birds of Arkansas.'**—Prof. W. J. Baerg, of the Entomological Department of the University of Arkansas, College of Agriculture, has prepared an excellent pamphlet<sup>1</sup> on the birds of the state. There are introductory remarks on distribution, migration, song, conservation etc., with a table of arrival dates at Fayetteville and another showing song periods.

The main text consists of a brief description of each species and a statement of range followed, in the case of the better known species, by a short account of habits, etc. A number of halftone illustrations are scattered through the text.

The present list includes 312 species or subspecies of which 15 have not definitely been observed within the state limits but are listed because there is every likelihood of their presence there. Howell's list of 1911 contained 255 forms with 35 additional not yet definitely found within the state, while Wheeler's list, 1924, included 287 species and subspecies of which 2 were not definitely known from within the state limits, so that the score would seem to stand Howell 255, Wheeler 285, and Baerg 297.

Mr. Baerg's publication will prove of much assistance to teachers and bird students throughout Arkansas and will doubtless result, in the near future, in definite records for the fifteen species requiring confirmation.—W. S.

**Van Schaick's 'The Little Hill Farm.'**—Those who are familiar with Mr. Van Schaick's nature sketches will welcome another little volume

<sup>1</sup> Birds of Arkansas. By W. J. Baerg. Bulletin No. 258. Agricultural Experiment Station. Univ. Arkansas. College of Agriculture. Dan T. Gray, Director. Fayetteville, Arkansas. January, 1931. Pp. 1-197. Price 77 cents.