

work he has done at this one place, and the views he holds about it, he can answer for the whole of Australia. I consider there is plenty of proof that Cormorants are doing much more harm than good, and I have seen nothing so far which points to the contrary; in fact, I am quite unable to see any rosy picture of the benefits likely to accrue from these birds—their pernicious habits can only play havoc with our native fish. All my experience goes to prove that Cormorants are detrimental, so I cannot share Capt. White's optimism. He asks how much research work have I done to back up my statements? Have I ever opened a Cormorant and noted the stomach contents? At the beginning of his article he said—"I shall take no notice of personalities." However, I will answer the questions. The first is rather difficult, as it would necessitate a lot of writing as to exactly how much research work I have actually done. I will only say I consider I have seen quite sufficient to substantiate my argument; but, in these pages, I think there should be an endeavour to refrain from egotism and pretentiousness. With regard to the second part of the question, I make no secret of the fact that I seldom miss a chance to shoot a Cormorant, and invariably open and examine the contents of the stomach, and my experience has been quite the contrary to Capt. White's; nearly all I have examined have contained good food fish, if obtainable.

I have now expressed my opinion upon this subject fairly and openly, and I claim as much right to do so as anybody else. And, finally, I must say the theory I hold I feel sure will be perpetually held by most people competent to judge. At the same time I believe that Capt. White thinks his side of the argument is also correct, but no man is infallible. I will here state that I will not write any further upon this subject to *The Emu*; I have definitely stated my views, so I consider it unnecessary to say anything further.—
Yours, &c.

THOS. P. AUSTIN.

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Reviews.

[Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum. Bulletin 107. "Life-Histories of North American Diving Birds, Order Pygopodes." By Arthur Cleveland Bent, of Taunton, Massachusetts. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1819.]

MR. Bent, in his "Introduction," naively concludes:—"If the reader fails to find mentioned in these pages some **things** which he knows about the birds, he can blame himself **for not** having sent them to **THE AUTHOR**." Although the work is a triumph for the field oologist and observer, all partaking in its compilation are to be highly congratulated.

It should be added that the work is **numerously** illuminated by rare and splendid photo-pictures, and **at the end** are a dozen coloured plates of eggs—those especially **handsome** depicting the eggs of the Murre and Razor-billed Auk.

"HABITS AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE GUANO BIRDS
OF PERU."

THIS important work by Dr. Robert E. Coker, who is in charge of the Scientific Inquiry, United States Bureau of Fisheries, is reprinted from the *Proceedings of the United States National Museum*, vol. lvi., pp. 449-511, plates 53-69.

It would appear that the three chief guano birds, in order of value, are a Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax bougainvillei*), a Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*), and a Gannet (*Sula variegata*); and it may come as a surprise to those persons who advocate the wholesale destruction of Cormorants to learn that Dr. Coker regards the Peruvian White-breasted Cormorant or "Guanay" (meaning "Guano-Bird") one of the most valuable birds of the world. From analyses and other scientific calculations "the value of the guano deposited by this single flock (a rookery of Cormorants) during a period of a little more than three years may be stated at nearly one million dollars. . . . Fowl which produce \$1.43 worth of guano a pair annually without expense for care and feeding except the nominal cost of protection may well be appraised at \$15 (or over £3) a pair. The fowl which dwell on the South Chinchá Island alone, when it was visited in 1907, might well be regarded as an asset representing a value of several millions of dollars."

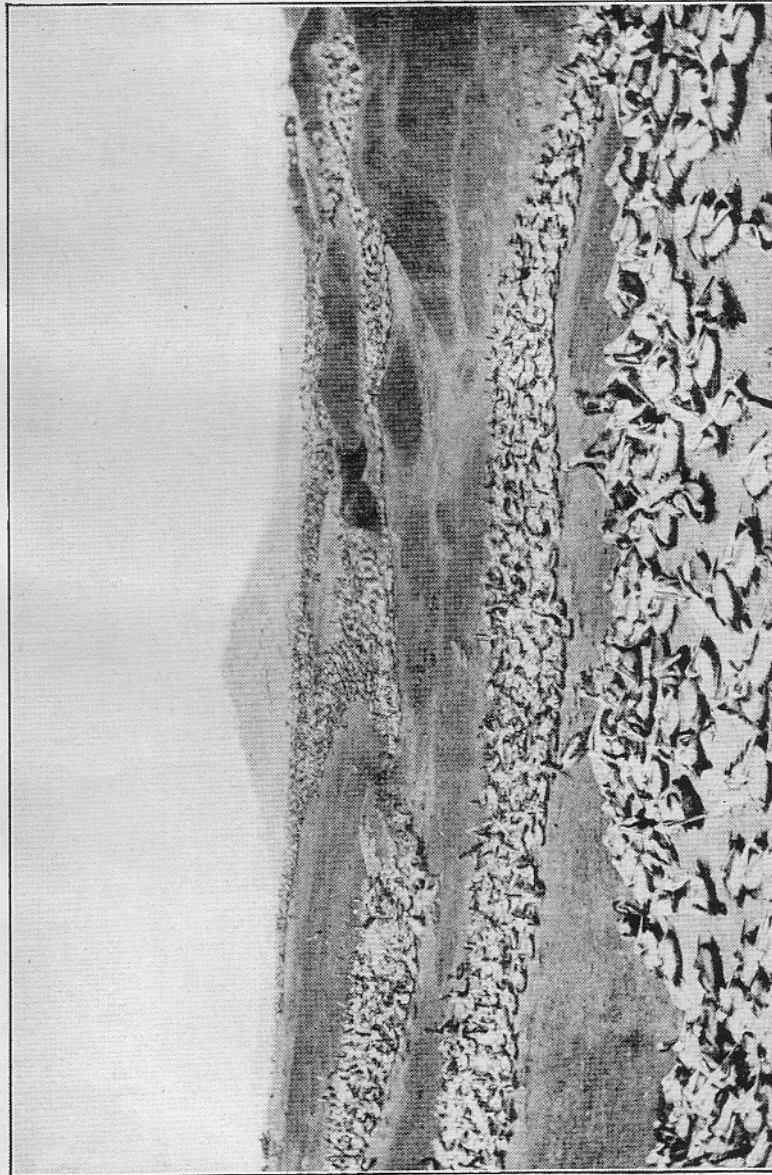
The photo-plates of birds and scenes accompanying the reprint are very fine, while the plates of the Cormorants and the Pelicans, for sheer numbers of bird-crowds, are simply bewildering. A *fac-simile* of one of the latter scenes is herewith given.

[*"The Birds of Australia."* Part v., vol. vii. By Gregory M. Mathews F.R.S.E.]

THIS part completes volume vii., and also completes the treatment of the non-Passerine birds. The members of one order, Passeriformes (perching birds), have still to be treated, but this order embraces about half the birds of Australia, so that the completion of this great work is not yet in sight.

The Lyre-Bird is confirmed by Mathews as being worthy of the rank of an order. He thinks further research will probably show that its proper place is not next to the *Passeriformes*. Three sub-species are proposed by Mr. Mathews for the southern Lyre-Bird. The northern Lyre-Bird is placed in a separate genus, *Harriwhitea*, and two sub-species are proposed. Gould's description of its life and habits, being still the best, is fully quoted. Mathews says:—"It seems that the bird is now approaching extinction, if this be not already achieved."

Five birds are included and figured as a kind of supplement to bring the first seven volumes up to date. These are *Globicera pacifica*, not well named the Queensland Pigeon (Queensland has many Pigeons); the Fluttering Petrel (*Reinholdia reinholdi*), figured for Mr. Basset Hull, president R.A.O.U., in *The Emu*, vol. xv., plate xxxii.; the Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*);



Nesting Ground of Pelicans, Losbos de Afuera, West Island.
From Proc. U.S. National Museum, vol. lvi., pl. 67.

the Snowy Albatross (*Diomedea chionopectera*); and the Golden-shouldered Parrot (*Psephotellus chrysopterygius*), which Australians feared was extinct until Dr. Macgillivray and Mr. M'Lennan re-discovered it on the Cape York Peninsula.

"Addenda" give the generic name "*Tavistocka*" for the Spotted-sided Finch, and the name *Steganopleura* (replacing *Stizoptera*) for the Banded Finch.

The appendices contain matter of much value and importance to ornithologists generally and Australian ornithologists in particular.

The Library.

THE Union's library is growing apace, and the hon. librarian (Mr. Erasmus Wilson) is greatly handicapped for the want of proper cases for shelving many valuable books, not to mention periodicals.

A generous member, who desires his name suppressed at present, has kindly donated £5 towards supplying new bookcases. The hon. librarian hopes that this good example will be followed. Any sum, however small, will be of service.

Additions to the Library.

BY F. ERASMUS WILSON, R.A.O.U., Hon. Librarian.

"Birds and the War," by Hugh S. Gladstone. Skeffington and Son. London, 1919.

The author, whose military duties kept him in London, collected all available information dealing with the effects of war on bird life, and has compiled an entertaining little book, written in the popular strain. Many sea-birds are shown to have perished owing to their plumage having become matted together with crude oil, liberated owing to the destruction of submarines or oil-tank craft. Guillemots, Razorbills, Puffins, Eider Ducks, and Gulls all met their fate in this manner, for, being unable to fly or dive, they soon died of starvation.

"Life Histories of North American Diving Birds," Order Pygopodes, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum, Bulletin 107.

The order Pygopodes contains the following North American birds:—Grebes, Loons, Puffins, Auklets, Auks, Murrelets, Guillemots, Murres, and the Dovekie, and Mr. Bent has dealt with his subject in a very masterly manner.

"Spencer Fullerton Baird," a biography, including selections from his correspondence with Audubon, Agassiz, Dana, and others. By William Healey Dall, M.A., B.Sc. J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia and London.

Spencer Fullerton Baird, born 1823, died 1887, might be