

no notice of them whatever, but stuck to the robin and as he, poor bird, was much too busy hunting worms to notice anything else, the blackbirds presently calmed down and flew away, no doubt concluding that it must be a case of mistaken identity.

Has any reader of *THE FIELD-NATURALIST* ever heard of such a curious mix-up as this? It is, I suppose, just possible that the explanation may be that a crow blackbird's egg was laid in the robin's nest. The nest was so situated close to the glass of a window that one could look into it quite easily from one of the rooms of my house. Nevertheless

I did not examine it until the eggs were hatched, and then only very cursorally. It is, therefore, possible, though I think unlikely, that the young crow blackbird was in the nest and escaped my notice. Naturally I was not expecting that any question would arise as to the identity of the young robins. Still I think the more likely explanation to be that by some curious chance the robin accidentally adopted one of his neighbor's children soon after the two families had simultaneously left their respective nests.

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### BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

*THE BIRDS OF MIDDLE AND NORTH AMERICA.* By Robt. Ridgway, Part VIII, Continuation of Bulletin 50, U.S. National Museum, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919.

The monumental task of monographing all the birds of North and Middle America was begun by this veteran ornithologist, now probably the Dean of the science in America, many years ago. The first volume covering the Finches and Sparrows appeared in October, 1901. Since then the following parts have appeared. The contents covering Canadian species only is given here.

Part II, 1902, The Tanagers, Troupials (blackbird and orioles) and Wood Warblers.

Part III, 1904, Pipits, Swallows, Waxwings, Vireos, Shrikes, Crows and Jays; Titmice, Nuthatches, Creepers, Wrens, and Dippers.

Part IV, 1907, Thrushes, Mockingbirds, Starlings, Larks and Tyrant Flycatchers.

Part V, 1911, Hummingbirds and Swifts.

Part VI, 1914, Woodpeckers, Kingfishers, Goatsuckers, and the Barn and Eared Owls.

Part VII, 1916, Cuckoos and Pigeons.

This present volume now appearing includes Oyster-catchers, Turnstones, Surf Birds, Plovers, Snipes, Phalaropes, Avocets, Skimmers, Terns, Gulls, Skuas and Auks.

The next Part, namely IX, now in course of preparation, will contain Cranes, Rails, Gallinules and Coots; Turkeys, American Partridge, Grouse, Falcons, Hawks and Eagles and American Vultures.

It is contemplated that Part X will complete the work.

The magnitude of this work can be partially appreciated by the fact that each volume runs from 550 to 875 closely printed pages, many of them consisting of masses of abbreviated bibliographical references and synonymy requiring immense research and exact transcription and proofreading. Dr. Elliott Coues said that bibliography required the work of an "inspired idiot." On these grounds alone the

Birds of Middle and North America would be notable, but as each species and subspecies is accompanied by the fullest detailed description and each has been subjected to the strictest scrutiny as to taxonomic standing and relationship by one of the keenest observers in America it is evident that this will stand as a monument to the author for many years. It will be noted that the classification does not follow that of the A.O.U. Check list and is not familiar to the majority of American ornithologists. In this it probably shows a considerable step in advance. The latter is acknowledged to be faulty, but it has not been thought expedient to change it until a system can be presented that will meet a more general approval than any hitherto advanced receives. The work is not popular, but confines itself to strictly scientific aspects of taxonomy, nomenclature, identification and distribution. The purely popular nature student has little interest in it except as a reservoir of ascertained facts to guide, control and direct his esthetic impressions and investigations.

P. A. TAVERNER.

HAMILTON M. LAING. Whilst it is not the custom to treat newspapers as serious scientific publications it seems that some attention should be called to the series of excellent articles on popular ornithology appearing more or less regularly in the *Toronto Globe*. These are from the pen of Hamilton M. Laing, who is taking the place of the late lamented Sam Woods who conducted this nature column with but scanty recognition for a long period. Mr. Laing is a Canadian, of considerable experience in Manitoba, now resident in Portland, Oregon. During the latter days of the war he was in the aviation corps and assisted in training many of our fliers who later made a good account of themselves at the front.

The subject of these papers cover such a range of subjects as "The Shore Birds in Autumn,"



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