

Swann's 'A Dictionary of English and Folk-Names of British Birds.'<sup>1</sup>—Bird students cannot but speculate upon the origin of the various vernacular names which they encounter in the literature of ornithology and as few are students of philology or folk-lore Mr. Swann's handy volume comes as a welcome work of reference in which we may find the answer to many a question. He presents a list of upwards of 5000 names which have been applied to British birds, arranged alphabetically, with their meaning and origin where traceable, and accompanied by fables and verses, regarding the various species, which have been handed down in the folk-lore of England. As most of the American bird names are adapted from those of English species, the work appeals alike to ornithologists on both sides of the Atlantic.

The author finds the "Avium Praecipuarum Historia" of W. Turner 1544 to be the first work containing a list of birds with English names affixed, and beginning with this and the occasional bird names of Chaucer, he has traced the varying nomenclature through a long list of publications which are cited in the bibliography.

The longer articles contain much interesting reading. We find under 'Barnacle-Goose,' the ancient belief that these geese were hatched directly from barnacles which fell from a tree called the Goose-tree, but it is further pointed out that the name 'Bernicle' probably referred originally to the bird and that its application to the cirriped was secondary. 'Brant' we find is derived from the Welsh 'brenig' a limpet, doubtless from some similar association. 'Cob' and 'Pen' we learn were old names for the male and female Swan, while 'Ruff' and 'Reeve' for the sexes of the Ruff, the question being still open as to whether the bird was named after the Elizabethan frill or the frill after the bird.

'Bittern' comes from *Botaurus* originally *boatum tauri*, the 'bellowing of a bull'; 'Cormorant' from *Corvus marinus*; 'Sea Crow,' and 'Lapwing' from the Anglo Saxon *Hleapewince*, 'one who turns in running or flying.'

Among the many interesting scraps of folk-lore we may mention the legend of the Crossbill having acquired its twisted beak from striving to draw the nails that held Christ to the Cross; also the verse regarding the Carrion Crow:

One's unlucky,  
Two's lucky;  
Three is health;  
Four is wealth;  
Five is sickness,  
And six is death.

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<sup>1</sup> A Dictionary | of | English and Folk-Names | of | British Birds, | With their History, Meaning and first usage: | and the Folk-lore, Weather-lore, Legends, etc., | relating to the more familiar species. | By | H. Kirke Swann. | Witherby & Co., | 326 High Holborn, London W. C. | 1913. 8vo, pp. i-vii, 1-266. 10 shillings net.



and that referring to the Magpie

One is sorrow, two mirth,  
Three a wedding, four a birth,  
Five heaven, six hell,  
Seven the de'il's ain sell.

Ancient Swan-worship is referred to and the survival to the present day of the ancient oath, in the form 'I swan' or 'I swanny.'

The only criticism that we would make of this valuable book is the need of fuller cross references. Under 'Swan' we find, "see mute-Swan" (p. 163) while as a matter of fact there is more information regarding Swans under Whooper Swan (p. 253) than under the reference cited, and such general terms as Sandpiper, Gull, Owl, etc. are not to be found at all, though under some one of the species doubtless the origin of the names is explained. — W. S.

**Chapman's 'Color Key to North American Birds.'**<sup>1</sup> — This is a new edition of Mr. Chapman's well known and useful volume. The main text is unchanged but the Systematic Table presents all the species and subspecies of North American Birds with their nomenclature revised to and including the last supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union's 'Check-List,' while an Appendix explains in detail the changes that have taken place since the first edition of the 'Color Key,' and presents descriptions of the forms that have been added to the list.

A second appendix consists of a 'Faunal Bibliography,' of publications dealing with the birds of various localities in North America arranged by states and provinces. This is very complete and is the most important list of the kind since that published by Dr. Elliot Coues as an appendix to his 'Birds of the Colorado Valley' in 1878. It will prove indispensable to those who are forming a collection of works on North American ornithology. With all its good features retained and the valuable additions to which we have alluded the 'Color Key' should continue to hold its deservedly popular place in American bird literature. — W. S.

**Hornaday's 'Our Vanishing Wild Life.'**<sup>2</sup> — So numerous are the publications treating of wild-life conservation and so similar are many of them, that the average reader is inclined to pass by any new contribution to the

<sup>1</sup> Color Key to North American Birds. With Bibliographical Appendix. By Frank M. Chapman, Curator of Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History. With Upward of 800 Drawings by Chester A. Reed, B. S. Revised Edition. New York. D. Appleton & Company. 1912. 8vo., pp. i-x, 1-356. Cloth, \$2.50 net. Postpaid, \$2.74.

<sup>2</sup> Our Vanishing Wild Life. Its Extermination and Preservation. By William T. Hornaday, Sc. D., Director of the New York Zoölogical Park; author of "The American Natural History"; Ex-President of the American Bison Society. With Maps and Illustrations, New York, New York Zoölogical Society, 1913. 8vo, pp. i-xvi, 1-411, net \$1.50 (Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. City).



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