

lords. It was only a step, indeed, from this condition of things to the manorial system. This step was taken immediately after the permanent settlement of the Germans within the limits of the Roman empire. The land system of the later empire was very much like a manorial system. So it happened, that, while the Germans were approaching this system on the one hand, the Romans were approaching it on the other. They reached it together.

This is the briefest possible *résumé* of Mr. Seeböhm's extremely interesting and valuable book. The argument is well arranged and very convincing. It is, perhaps, a little too much encumbered by details; but we should be sorry not to have these details, and the book is quite readable in spite of them. The account of the manorial system is the most complete that we have. The book is a mine of information upon the subject. It will be found indispensable to students. It is very well printed, and illustrated by plates and maps. It would be worth having for these alone. In conclusion, we must heartily congratulate the writer upon the completion of so excellent and useful a work.

STEARNS AND COUES' NEW-ENGLAND BIRD-LIFE.

New-England bird-life; being a manual of New-England ornithology. Revised and edited from the manuscript of Winfrid A. Stearns, by Dr. Elliott Coues. Boston, Lee & Shepard, 1881, 1883. 324+409 p. Illustr. 8°.

UNDER this title Mr. Winfrid A. Stearns and Dr. Elliott Coues have just produced an excellent and much-needed work. Previous to its appearance we have had no complete or satisfactory exposition of the subject, despite several attempts on the part of inexperienced or otherwise incompetent authors to cover the interesting field: hence the present book is doubly welcome.

It has appeared in two volumes, or parts. Part i., issued two years ago, begins with Turdidae, or thrushes, and carries the subject through Oscines, ending with the family Corvidae. In addition to the 270 pages occupied by its main portion, there is an 'Introduction' of fifty pages, which includes useful chapters on the classification and structure of birds; the 'Preparation of specimens for study'; the 'Subject of faunal areas'; and the 'Literature of New-England ornithology.' Including those devoted to its special index

as well as to the introduction, part i. contains 324 pages.

Part ii. was published early in the present year. It has in all 409 pages, of which ten are occupied by an 'editor's preface,' and eight by the index; the remaining 397 pages treating the general subject from Tyrannidae through the successive families to Alcidae, last and lowest in the scale of New-England bird-life. Both volumes are rather copiously illustrated with fairly good woodcuts; some of which are full-length figures, others representations of the heads, feet, wings, etc., of birds, designed to show technical or distinguishing characters. Most of these cuts have done similar duty before, but on this account they are none the less useful in the present connection.

The plan of the book is so clearly and tersely outlined in the preface to part i., that we cannot do better than give it in the editor's own words:—

"It is the object of the present volume to go carefully over the whole ground, and to present, in concise and convenient form, an epitome of the bird-life of New England. The claims of each species to be considered a member of the New-England fauna are critically examined, and not one is admitted upon insufficient evidence of its occurrence within this area; the design being to give a thoroughly reliable list of the birds, with an account of the leading facts in the life-history of each species. The plan of the work includes brief descriptions of the birds themselves, enabling one to identify any specimen he may have in hand; the local distribution, migration, and relative abundance of every species; together with as much general information respecting their habits as can conveniently be brought within the compass of a hand-book of New-England ornithology."

This plan is consistently and faithfully carried out. The descriptions of the birds, to be sure, are a little meagre and unsatisfactory at times; but it must be remembered that they are intended primarily for a class of amateurs who are not fitted, either by experience or inclination, to wade through more exact, technical diagnoses.

The biographical matter is written in the editor's well-known and eminently characteristic style,—a style not wholly free from faults perhaps, but, in the main, so finished and picturesque that it is sure to attract and interest every lover of birds. In the present instance, the only fault we have to find with these biographies is that they are often too brief and general,—in short, that there is too much condensation. Especially is this the case among water-birds, where the account of habits, distribution, etc., is frequently crowded into a few lines. Doubtless this was necessary

to keep the work within its assigned limits, but it is none the less a disappointment.

One of the most valuable features of the book — to the scientific ornithologist, at least — is the bringing together of previous records pertaining to the rarer birds. In almost all cases these have been exhaustively collated, a work chiefly, if not wholly, performed by Mr. Purdie, whose well-known fitness for the task is a practical guaranty of its thorough accomplishment.

The weakest spot in the structure is that of the editor's rulings on questions affecting the comparative abundance and seasonal distribution of the less-known birds. In many — far too many — cases, his conclusions are more or less unwarranted or premature; in not a few, they are positively and demonstrably erroneous. This was to be expected, however, in view of the fact that neither editor nor author is known to have had an extensive experience in New-England fields or woodlands; and, considering such limitations, it is chiefly remarkable that they have done so well.

But, despite its shortcomings, 'New-England bird-life,' as a whole, may be honestly characterized as a work of real merit and unquestioned utility. Its faults are seldom vital, its excellences many and obvious. Although a manual, rather than a comprehensive general treatise, it cannot fail to take a high and permanent place among the literature of North-American ornithology. To the student of New-England birds, it is sure to prove a valuable hand-book, adequate for the determination of most problems which the limited field is likely to furnish. There is still room, of course, for the more extensive structures which some

future builders will doubtless rear on this substantial corner-stone.

Before concluding, we find it necessary to revert to a rather delicate subject, — that of the ostensible authorship of the book. In the preface to part i., the editor touches on this, as follows: —

"Mr. Stearns undertook this work several years ago, at the writer's suggestion, that such a treatise was much to be desired, and could not fail to subserve a useful purpose. Having been diligently revised from time to time, in the light of our steadily increasing knowledge, Mr. Stearns's manuscripts have been submitted to the editor's final corrections. In revising, and to some extent rewriting, them for publication, the editor has been influenced by the author's request that he would alter and amend at his own discretion."

Perhaps we are bound to accept this explanation literally; but the reader familiar with Dr. Coues's characteristic style and methods will find few traces of Mr. Stearns's alleged participation. Clearly the 'revising' was very thoroughly done. We might go even farther, and venture the surmise that Dr. Coues not only edited, but *wrote*, the entire book. But is this a matter with which we have any business to meddle? Probably not so far as Dr. Coues's interests are at stake. If he chooses to do all the work, and take less than half the credit, it is his own affair. Nevertheless, it certainly *is* our right to challenge a reputation unfairly won, and until further proofs are forthcoming we shall refuse to believe that Mr. Stearns's agency in 'New-England bird-life' has been much more than nominal. Perhaps the inside history of the book will never be made public, but intelligent ornithologists are likely to see through a millstone with a hole in the middle.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

PROCEEDINGS OF SECTION H. — ANTHROPOLOGY.

ADDRESS OF OTIS T. MASON OF WASHINGTON, D.C., VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SECTION, AUG. 15, 1883.

THE SCOPE AND VALUE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES.

EVERY thing that comes before the human mind has to pass through a process of weighing and measuring, and receives a valuation according to the thinker's standards of merit. In this critical spirit let us pass in review those studies called anthropol-

gical, in order to form some estimate of their value according to the measures commonly applied to various departments of learning.

Anthropology is the application of the instrumentalities and methods of natural history to the inductive study of man. The anthropologist, in this sense, is not a dilettante philosopher, who inquires into old things because they are old, or into curious things while they are curious, omitting all the great movements and needs of society, and overloading the baggage-train of progress with trumpery picked up along the march. The practical spirit of our age demands that we ask what truth, or good, or beauty