

pointed out several of the errors it contains, he has, I think, failed to place before your readers its utter worthlessness as an authentic work, and will, I fear, assist to spread its mischievous influence rather than prevent it. I need scarcely to remark that I refer entirely to those portions of the book which applies to the bird life of Canada, and not to that which is copied from Dr. Cones' "Key to North American," one of the best and most reliable works ever published. Had M. Dionne been content to translate the "Key," or such portions of it as would be most useful to Canadian students, he would have gained the well-merited thanks of the French-speaking members of the fraternity.

So much of the book being of an excellent character, creditable alike to M. Dionne's industry, skill and good judgment, it is all the more to be regretted that he had not spent the little additional care and labor which was required to make "Les Oiseaux du Canada" a standard authority. But he failed to give the matter the attention its importance demanded, and it is due to students that they be warned against accepting his statements, and also due to those who may be contemplating authorship that they shall be taught that they are assuming a grave responsibility, and can not with impunity publish for scientific facts an array of statements drawn from their imaginations or compiled with indifference to the reliability of their authorities.

M. Dionne's book exhibits clear evidence of the influence of another mischievous work, "The Birds of Canada," by A. M. Ross, M.D., &c., &c., &c., &c. The long list of et ceteras by which this author sought to impress upon his readers his eminent qualifications for writing a standard work did not save it from being dismissed by the English "Zoological Record," with this severe sentence, "The text is valueless." Every one must admit that such books are worse than merely "valueless," for, placed in the hands of young students who cannot discriminate between the good and the bad which they contain, they become misleading. This matter is of such importance that I ask a little space to quote a few examples from these books by way of illustrating their character. I will quote from both, for the one is such a close imitation of the other that the original must be examined to determine the value of the copy.

In the first place, the titles of the books are misleading, for it can not be correctly said of

either that they contain accounts of the birds of *Canada* as such. Dr. Ross' work refers almost wholly to a part of Ontario, the few references to the maritime Provinces, chiefly drawn from Audubon, and the list of species found in Manitoba and British Columbia, which is appended to the second edition, do not redeem the body of the work from its purely local character, and to give it a title bearing a wider significance is to handicap it with a pretension which its contents will not sustain, and will also cause confusion to inexperienced readers. The same remark will apply with greater force to M. Dionne's work, for he has mentioned only a small portion of the western species, and treats them as if they occurred in the Eastern Provinces, having in the preface stated that he had omitted the *fauna* of Manitoba and British Columbia.

To state, as Dr. Ross does, that the Brown Thrasher "is one of our most common birds," that the House Wren "arrives from the south the first week in May," that the Evening Grosbeak "is a visitor," and to make no further mention of the localities in which they occur, in a book entitled "The Birds of Canada," is calculated to create a false impression; for though all this may apply to Ontario, it does not apply to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, as these birds have never been found there.

The only remark which M. Dionne makes about the distribution of the Olive-backed Thrush is "Cette espèce est rare aux environs de Québec." As a matter of fact, I have found this species common throughout New Brunswick, at no locality more so than at Malawaska, on the Quebec border; and it is also common at Lennoxville. Besides these facts, we have Mr. Wintle's report of its occurrence near Montreal, and Mr. Merriam's report of it being "not uncommon" near the Goulbourn; the name is on the Morden-Saunders list of Western Ontario, and in Mr. McIlwraith's old list of Hamilton species; Mr. J. Matthew Jones reports it common in Nova Scotia, and Prof. Macoun found it in Manitoba, while it has been traced west to the Pacific slope and north to the Arctic. With such information easy of access, it is quite inexcusable to imply that the only locality in which the bird is known to occur in Canada is near Quebec; and when an author will so carelessly make statements which we know to be incorrect, we cannot be expected to rely