

P R E F A C E.

AS we review the large list of books on American ornithology now in print, it seems almost incredible that, when the first edition of the "Ornithology and Oölogy of New England" was published in 1867, there was hardly another book to be obtained on our birds, adapted to popular use.

The large and very expensive work of Audubon, and the smaller ones by Nuttall and Wilson, comprised about everything there was, and these were to be found by accident only on the book-dealers' shelves, and were held at prices quite beyond the reach of the masses.

Repeated inquiries from numerous persons interested in ornithology convinced me that there was a great and increasing want for a popular work on our birds, and in response to them I set about its preparation and publication.

In this book I corrected certain important errors that had been published in relation to the breeding habits of some of the species, and added new facts to our knowledge respecting those of others. I also gave pretty elaborate descriptions of the nests and eggs of many that had not been before described.

Up to that period comparatively little attention had been devoted to oölogy in this country, and very few of our professed ornithologists were well acquainted with the eggs of a large proportion of our birds.

Hardly one ornithologist in ten, at the time the book was first issued, could identify the nest and eggs of such birds as the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bird, Rusty Blackbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and scores of others, such as are now regarded as common, and are found in the collections of all who make any claims as ornithologists.

This seems hard to believe, but there are few who