

he had to contend with ; he had not the means, neither were there in his day facilities for making long journeys, at small expense, such as we now enjoy ; his researches were therefore chiefly confined to the middle Atlantic States, yet within that limited space of what is usually termed North America, he described over 280 species of birds, many of which had been entirely overlooked by previous writers.

When referring to the few mistakes he made, we must also remember that he had not access to any library of Natural History, such as now exists in many of the American Cities, neither was there at that time any museum worthy of the name, to which he could repair with his doubtful species. To him, however, Nature's great Museum in the woods, was ever open, thither he went, gun in hand, in quest of his favourite birds, and the habits of such as came under his own observation, he has described with a truth and felicity which has never been excelled.

Audubon followed with all the enthusiasm peculiar to his countrymen, and by extending the field of his observations, and procuring specimens from distant parts of the continent, brought up the number of described species to about 500.

Since the time that the writings of these authors were submitted to the public, many influences have been in operation to bring the subject nearer to completion, foremost of which have no doubt been, the general diffusion of knowledge, and the attention which has been paid to education throughout the United States. A new field of observation has also been opened up by the annexation of Texas, New Mexico and California, where a great variety of birds are found which do not occur on the northern or eastern part of the Continent ; these vast territories have been visited by various scientific men, who have published from time to time their notes and observations on the new species of birds met with, but owing to the great expense attending the getting up of such works with costly illustrations, they have never been much known to the public.

The American Government too, deserves all credit for the facilities it has granted, for collecting, arranging, and publishing, the most recent discoveries on this subject. With each of the exploring parties which have within the last few years traversed the western part of the Continent, for various purposes, officers have been sent, specially charged with making notes and collecting specimens of the natural history of the different regions through which they passed, and the