

## BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

THREE YOUNG CRUSOES, published and for sale by Wm. Alphonso Merrill, A.M., Ph.D., Bronxwood Park, New York City. Price \$1.50.

This book which contains a story of the Life and "Adventures of Three Young People on an Island in the West Indies, was written for the entertainment of children between the ages of twelve and eighteen years. The characters are fictitious, but the natural history is reliable and visitors to any part of the West Indies may find the book helpful. It consists of thirty-two chapters with eighty-three illustrations and two colored plates.

Teachers will also find this work useful, as it describes the animals, trees, flowers, fruits, birds, fishes and minerals to be found on the Island.

R. M. G.

The *Auk* for January, 1919, contains a number of articles of interest to Canadians.

THE BIRDS OF THE RED DEER RIVER, ALBERTA, by P. A. Taverner, pp. 2-21, 4 pl. This is based upon explorations and collections made by the Geological Survey in the Red Deer Valley in 1917, but in addition includes all other ornithological matter to hand on the district. After a general introduction, description of the region and sources of information, is an annotated list of 79 species, from the grebe through the birds of prey. A second instalment is to continue and conclude the list. The plates give typical river views and nesting sites of Ferruginous Roughleg Hawk and Prairie Falcon.

FURTHER NOTES ON NEW BRUNSWICK BIRDS, by P. B. Philipp and B. S. Bowdish, pp. 36-43, 2 pl. This gives the results of ornithological investigations in Northumberland Co., N.B., in the summer of 1917, being additional to papers on the same locally published, *Auk*, 1916, pp. 1-8, and *ibid*, 1917, pp. 265-275. Annotations are given on 43 species. Most of the notes are on life-history and oological subjects, but the distributional data included is of considerable assistance to an understanding of Maritime Province conditions. Probably the most striking result obtained was the finding of four nests of the Cape May Warbler which as a breeding bird remains one of the very rarest of the warblers. The plates are admirable and show nests of the Cape May Warbler and Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, a Wilson's Snipe on the nest, and a remarkable fine portrait of a Three-toed Woodpecker itself.

On looking over the list one cannot help wondering at the basis of the subspecific designations. There is nothing to indicate either that specimens were taken, or if taken, who is responsible for and upon what grounds they were diagnosed. The internal evidence suggests that the writers merely followed

"common report", a very common practice nowadays, but not a scientific method and one that should be reformed. The great majority of the determinations are probably correct. One case at least gives force to this protest. *Dryobates villosus leucomelas*, the Northern Hairy Woodpecker is given as the local form. Though this race has become firmly fixed in current southern Canadian literature, according to all exact data available to the reviewer this is, in the nest, a high northern form and its occurrence in summer south of the Gulf is a questionable assumption. The authors may possibly be correct in this case, but without further evidence than the mere statement of a name we are warranted in stating doubt. It is the view of the reviewer that the use of the subspecific name and trinomial is only warranted when specimens have been critically examined and identity established by competent authority. Otherwise the specific binominal answers every purpose and is just as exact as hypothetical trinomial.

NOTES ON SOME BIRDS OF THE OKANAGAN VALLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA, by J. A. Munro, pp. 64-74. This paper gives extensive annotations on twenty species of this interesting section. It contains a great amount of life-history and breeding notes on some interesting species. The remarks regarding the food of some of the hawks is specially interesting to the reviewer. The Big Red-tails are noted as feeding on various small mammals such as Ground and Pine Squirrels and Pikas; and some interesting data is given upon Swainson's Hawk coming in in numbers to feed upon a plague of large black crickets that were eating every green thing in sight near Vernon in 1915. The Magpies are said to be the worst egg thieves of the corvidæ and are showing undue increase. The description of Richardson's Grouse is particularly interesting and introduces much new information into our literature. On the whole, this is an admirable article. A criticism similar to that above would apply equally here. Though we happen to know that Mr. Munro has specimens of all or most of his species and has given them critical examination, this is not evident from the context and its "inside information" that gives us confidence in his subspecific determinations. Even then I would like to ask if he is certain it was *Planesticus migratorius propinqua* that was seen from a distance teasing the Red-tail (p. 68). As described, the conditions of observation do not seem all that could be desired for the recognition of this poorly defined form. Without doubt Mr. Munro regards this as the breeding Robin in his section, but we fail to see the necessity of advancing a hypothetical subspecies where the species does just as