## ORNITHOLOGY.

### Edited by A. G. Kingston.

Albinism in the " English Sparrow" (*Passer domesticus*).—
As time goes on and this introduced species comes more thoroughly
under the influence of our dry climate with its extremes of temperature,
the appearance of occasional individuals lacking the usual quantum of
colouring matter in parts of the plumage seems to grow more frequent.
From colonies planted in Boston and New York about thirty years ago,
the sparrow made its first appearance in this northern latitude about
1872. Until recent years a sparrow showing white markings (apart
from the normal pattern of the species) was looked upon as a rarity;
now almost every large flock about the streets and gardens, if closely
examined, will be found to contain at least one bird with here or there
an odd white feather.

These marks are generally irregular, but occasionally a definite
pattern is noticeable. The writer has in his possession a specimen,
taken in May last, in which the secondary wing-quills are wholly white
and the tail white with a slight bar of grey at the tip. Mr. Fletcher
reports having seen one of somewhat similar plumage a few days ago in
Ann Street. The following patterns have also been observed :—

(1) A male with the usual black patch on the throat surrounded
with a border of white, which also extended as a white collar
around the neck.
(2) One with white secondaries.
(3) One with two parallel white stripes between the shoulders.
(4) One with the whole crown white.

Any of the readers of the NATURALIST who may observe cases of
albinism, or of the opposite peculiarity, melanism, an undue darkening
of the plumage, in sparrows would confer a favour by sending a short
note to either of the leaders of the Ornithological Section.

MIGRATION NOTES.—The migration of birds is to most persons
one of those mysterious movements of nature which they are compelled
to believe in, but whose processes can hardly be expected to be made
evident to the senses. Our feathered visitors disappear in autumn and
return to sight in spring, but the number of persons, even among those