



Turkey Buzzard. From Job's "Wild Wings." Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Bird Life

FROM the examination of specimens to the study of life is the great step which has been taken during the last few years in many branches of biological science, and especially in ornithology. We came

to realize that the plates in Audubon were not all that could be desired; that cabinets of bird skins, however necessary for classification, did not carry us much further toward acquaintance with the real bird. From "stuffed" birds, each stiff and formal on its perch, we advanced to the attractive and realistic groups with wax foliage and glass water which adorn our own museum; from a bird in a small cage to whole families flying freely in our park aviaries. The next step was to call upon the birds at their homes, instead of bringing them to us under unnatural conditions. This we cannot all of us find time to do and so we have to visit the birds by proxy.

There have always been bird watchers, but what we could get from them depended upon their powers of verbal description and ours of visual imagination. But now the new sport of hunting with the camera has brought us nearer to feral life than was before possible. Our sportsman President in a letter prefaced to Mr. Job's *Wild Wings*¹ approves of this substitution of the camera for the gun and says, "The older I grow the less I care to shoot anything except 'varmint'." Mr. Job's range is a wide

¹ WILD WINGS. *Adventures of a Camera-Hunter Among the Larger Wild Birds of North America on Sea and Land.* By Herbert Keightley Job. 160 illustrations. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company. \$3.00.

one; from the haunts of the heron among the Florida keys to the seal islands of Nova Scotia he photographs and describes the birds of the Atlantic coast. If any one thinks that the new sport lacks excitement and the zest of danger he should read the narrative of this enthusiastic hunter with the lens. His style of "hawking" is a great improvement over that of the ladies of the Middle Age. His photographs of egrets, ibises, terns, buzzards and petrels, in nest or in flight, are both beautiful as pictures and interesting from the difficulty of obtaining such snap shots of wild birds.

Until we get color photography it is

of his own observation and thought on the habits and instincts of birds. As he is a scientific man he avoids the error, now so common, of ignoring the distinction established by Plato between featherless and feathered bipeds, and so does not ascribe to birds the thoughts and feelings of civilized man.

Of an older fashion, but not out of fashion, is the *Bird Lore*³ of Mr. R. Bosworth Smith, wherein the former assistant master of Harrow chats pleasantly of the owls and cuckoos, ducks and magpies of the County of Dorset. Birds are interesting to him chiefly in their relation to human beings and he interweaves with



"The King Row." Five Kingfishers in Line, Illustrating Habit of Sitting Still. Birds Shown are Thirteen Days Old. From Herrick's "The Home Life of Wild Birds." (Putnam's)

hard to see how book illustration can ever improve upon *Wild Wings* and the similar work on the *Home Life of Wild Birds*.² Mr. Herrick does not go so far afield as Mr. Job. He makes a closer study of our common birds, the wren, the robin, the bluebird, the kingfisher, the cedar-bird and others, using the method which he devised of placing the nesting bough in front of a green tent containing the camera. In this way he is enabled to watch the nest at close range all day and take snap shots under the best conditions of light and position. Professor Herrick gives full details of his apparatus and many suggestions for such life studies, as well as the results

his ornithology an abundance of historical allusions, poetical quotations and personal reminiscences—together a very delightful mixture. In his chapter on the raven he begins with those of Noah and Odin, and after catching on the way down all the ravens in history, poetry and folk lore, including Elijah's, King Arthur's and Poe's, he concludes by telling what he has himself seen in the nests of Dorset.

Less erudite but somewhat similar in style is Mr. Torrey's story of his rambles from Mount Washington to the Everglades in acceptance of *Nature's Invitation*.⁴ Altho his gaze is ostensibly fixed

² THE HOME LIFE OF WILD BIRDS. A New Method of the Study and Photography of Birds. By Francis Hobart Herrick. 160 Illustrations. Revised edition. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.00.

³ BIRD LIFE AND BIRD LORE. By R. Bosworth Smith. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$3.00.

⁴ NATURE'S INVITATION. Notes of a Bird-Gazer, North and South. By Bradford Torrey. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company. \$1.10.

upon the birds, he has a sharp eye out for trees and animals and the idiosyncrasies of fellow-men. He uses an opera glass instead of a camera for watching the birds, but he is so skilful at drawing pen pictures that we see more through his eyes than we would in the best of photographs. The chapters on Texas, Arizona and Mexico deserts are of especial interest, for this ground has not been trod so often by the literary naturalist as New Hampshire and Florida.