

IX.

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—Collecting and Private Permits.—

On the above-mentioned topic, I may be permitted, as an onlooker, to offer the testimony of an independent and authoritative observer in America. What applies to America is surely good enough for Australia.

In the last issue of "The Auk," a quarterly journal of ornithology, January, 1924, Dr. Wm. C. Adams, Director of Fisheries and Game, Massachusetts, presents some pointed remarks on the subject of "Scientific Collecting." He commences by reference to previous remarks by Dr. A. K. Fisher, of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, in which remarks he (Adams) fully concurs. Dr. Adams thus concludes:—

"Several years ago I called together the ornithologists of the country, in so far as they could come to Boston, for a conference on what should be the policy of our Department in the matter of issuing permits to take birds and eggs for scientific purposes. About sixty men attended. They ranged in ages from men still in college to white-bearded men in the seventies. I asked that every man in the room stand up who was interested in bird-collecting before he reached the age of ten years, and every man in the room stood. Certain interesting facts came out in the discussion, embodied in the conclusion that *a State should be liberal in issuing these permits; that there were not enough younger men turning to these fields to keep up the work already started; that if young men and women were to be encouraged they should have an opportunity to start young, and that they should be stimulated by being permitted to collect their own material; that this part of the work was most valuable in getting them outdoors and in close touch with the elementary steps of scientific collecting and observing; that the mere study of specimens already preserved was not sufficient. It was even stated by one member that one of the largest educational institutions of the country had delayed sending out certain scientific expeditions for the reason that no young men were available who had had the necessary training.*

"The Conservation Commissioners throughout the country to a man should be squarely behind the ornithologists to help them in every possible way to carry out their investigations.

Dr. Fisher has made it perfectly plain that *the number of specimens taken is only a drop in the bucket compared to the losses to our wild life resulting from other causes.* We should not lose sight of the fact that those specimens taken for science are not lost. They do not go down the gullet, but into the brain, and eventually we are all rewarded by growing contributions to that fund of exact knowledge on which the hopes of our work must be based."
