

is studying. Who among our 'collectors' can boast of a vigil over a bird's nest which lasted for "nearly two months . . . day after day, early and late, in storm and sunshine"? With a just pride the patient watcher writes, "now I know at least one family of Kingbirds," and whether the results of her observations are of more value than the 'skin' or 'full-clutch' no one who reads her attractively written chapters will for a moment doubt. Withal her enthusiasm is tempered by discretion. She does not jump at conclusions nor sacrifice truth to rhetorical effect, and a careful reading of the twenty-six chapters her book contains, leaves us wondering whether we know any ornithologists who as observers have one half her perseverance. Only one fault do we discover, a fault we are sure so careful a writer will not fail to correct in the future volumes we hope to see from her hand. And this fault is lack of more detailed statements as regards both date and locality. Under the heading 'Great South Bay' we find two chapters from Massachusetts, while a record of the exact date on which her observations were made would in nowise detract from the popular character of the book and would add largely to the scientific value it unquestionably possesses.—F. M. C.

'Wood Notes Wild.'*—Some of Mr. Cheney's studies of bird music are already familiar to us through the pages of the magazines in which, from time to time, they have appeared.

They have now been collected by his son and, with the addition of before unpublished essays, copious extracts from the writings of other authors, and an extended bibliography, issued under the above title. The whole, we believe, forms the most extensive treatise on the subject extant.

Every writer of bird biographies has experienced the difficulty of describing bird's songs in an identifiable manner. There are some cries or call-notes, and more rarely songs, which so closely approach certain words of our language that by common consent their owners are dubbed forthwith and thus made to utter their own name, to the great assistance of beginners in ornithology. To this class belong the Pewee, Chickadee, Towhee, Bob-white, Squak, etc. But unfortunately the limits of human articulation are soon passed, and where description fails, as it too frequently does, we have ventured to hope musical notation might succeed. Certainly no one could be better fitted to prove its success than Mr. Cheney. A musician of undoubted ability, an ardent lover of nature, his book "is a record of the pastime of an old lover of birds, of a musician who counted it among his chief joys that he had lived thirty summers in a bird-haunted grove,—of one to whom the voice of the wood and field were as familiar as those of his own family" (editor's preface). We may than consider his labors as a fair, if not a final test of the assistance which musical notation can give us in recording and describing the songs of birds.

* Wood Notes Wild | Notations of Bird Music | By | Simeon Pease Cheney | Author of the American "Singing-book" | Collected and Arranged with Appendix, Notes, Bibliography, and General Index | By John Vance Cheney | . . . | Boston | Lee and Shepard Publishers | . . . | 1892. 12 mo. pp. i-xiv, 1-261, frontispiece.

Before reading 'Wood Notes Wild' we requested a pianist to play all the bird songs given in the first part of the book, while without looking at the page we attempted to identify each song as it was played. There are here (pp. 1-102) the songs of forty-one species. With thirty-nine of these we are perfectly familiar. The result was as follows:—

Thirty-three conveyed absolutely no impression, we could not even guess at their identity; while, of the remaining eight, five were named correctly. The species whose songs were recognized were Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Wood Pewee, and Quail. Making due allowance for the difference in tone between a piano and a bird's voice, this result, from the ornithologist's standpoint of identification, is disappointing and forces the conclusion that each bird must be the interpreter of its own song. But if in attempting the impossible Mr. Cheney has shared the common fate, as a lover of nature's voices he has written some charming sketches of bird life, and we cannot but regret that so sympathetic a writer should have left us so brief a record of his observations in the woods and fields.—F. M. C.

Oustalet on the Birds of Patagonia.*—The present volume gives a very full account of what is known of the birds of Antarctic America, including southern Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego, the Falkland Islands, and the various smaller islands of the neighboring Antarctic Seas. The work is based primarily on the rich collections formed by Dr. Hyades, Dr. Hahn, and M. Sanvinet, of the French Scientific Mission to Cape Horn, but includes also the collections made by M. Lebrun and the officers of the 'Volage,' in southern Patagonia. Instead of limiting the work to these collections, however, Dr. Oustalet has utilized the specimens collected by the various earlier French expeditions to this general region. The species of which specimens were actually in hand from the region in question number about 100, but 104 others are introduced as of actual or probable occurrence, on the basis of the literature of the subject. The species of the first catalogue (pp. 4-248) are treated at considerable length, the literature of the subject being fully cited, and much space given to the subject of their geographical distribution, and occasionally to questions of relationship and nomenclature. The annotations also include notes made by the collectors on the color of the eyes, beak, feet, etc., and the contents of the stomach. The volume closes with a synoptic table of the geographical distribution of "un total de 204 espèces pour les oiseaux qui ont été rapportés par la Mission du cap Horn ou qui ont été recueillis par d'autres expéditions dans la Patagonie proprement dite, au sud du Rio Negro, sur la Terre de Feu, la Terre des Etats, les îles avoisinantes, ou dans l'archipel des Malouines." The work is accompanied by six beautiful colored plates of (mostly) previously unfigured species.—J. A. A.

*Mission scientifique du Cap Horn, 1882-1883. Tome VI. Zoologie. Oiseaux, par E. Oustalet. 4to. pp. 341, pll. 6. Paris, 1891.