Columba vero, hoc viso, ramum arboris decerptum in fontem projecit, super quo sedens formica evasit. Auceps autem quidam post hoc, calamis compositis, ad columbam comprehendam ibat. Hoc autem viso, formica aucupis pedem momordit; ille vero dolens, et calamos projecit, et, ut columba statim fugeret, auctor fuit. Affabulatio: Fabula significat, opertere benefactoribus gratiam referre."

Which, freely translated, reads about as follows:

An ant, being thirsty, went down to a well, but, being carried along by the flow of water, was nearly drowned. A dove, however, seeing this, picked a twig from a tree and threw it into the well, and the ant, sitting upon it, made its escape. Later a bird catcher, armed with arrows, intended to secure the same dove. But when the ant saw this, she bit the foot of the bird hunter. Feeling the sudden pain, he dropped the arrows, and caused the dove to fly away at once. Moral: It is of importance to show gratitude to your benefactors.

As Æsop flourished (if he flourished at all) about 600 B. C., it will be seen that this remarkable tale is old indeed. It may with propriety be suggested that aspiring naturalists and especially those interested in zoölogy devote part of their earliest attention to this cheerful ancient mythologist, or at least to the collection of fables bearing his name. They will go far toward proving the truth of the old saying that "nothing is new under the sun." — S. M. GRONBERGER, *Washington, D. C.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Ridgway's 'Color Standards and Color Nomenclature.'[1] — Twenty-seven years have elapsed since the publication of Mr. Ridgways' "Nomenclature of Colors for Naturalists." Although this work at once became the standard for almost all descriptive work involving color names, the author realized its imperfections and within two years set about gathering materials for the more comprehensive treatise which is now before us. Probably no one in this country is better qualified for the task than Mr. Ridgway as he combines the artist's knowledge and appreciation of color with a large experience in matching colors in nature and a keen perception of minute differences in color tones.

[1] Color Standards | and | Color Nomenclature | By | Robert Ridgway, M. S., C. M. Z. S., etc. | Curator of the Division of Birds, United States | National Museum. | With Fifty-three Colored Plates | and | Eleven Hundred and Fifteen Named Colors.| Washington, D. C. | 1912. | Published by the Author.| 8vo, pp. 1–43, pll. I–LIII. Price $8. (cash with order), postage extra, registered 20 cts.

As was to be expected the treatment in this work is thoroughly scientific. The spectrum is divided into 36 colors which run in oblong blocks across the middle of the first twelve plates, three shades to a plate. Immediately above these is another series of 36 colors each one differing from its respective spectrum color by a definite admixture of white. Above these are two more series each with a larger proportion of white while below the spectrum colors are three series of shades differing from the latter by successive admixtures of black. We have therefore six shades based upon each of the 36 spectrum colors ranging upward toward white and downwards toward black.

Beginning with plate 13 we have the whole series over again with a definite proportion of neutral gray added to each of the 216 shades, and on the following plates additional series with two, three, four and five proportions of neutral gray added. As the whole scheme gradually tends toward a uniform gray tint the number of shades that are distinguishable decreases as we advance so that the latter series do not contain as many blocks as the earlier ones.

Every one of the 1115 shades is named and Mr. Ridgway has searched the literature and even trade catalogues for color names already in use. While the shades represented seem to be about all that the average eye can distinguish, nevertheless the author finds that 36 of the named colors in this former 'Nomenclature' fall between some of those here depicted, consequently they are dropped and their true position indicated in a table. Unfortunately many well known names fall in this way, but ornithologists who have seen so many familiar generic and specific names sink into oblivion can probably part with such terms as 'buff,' 'canary yellow,' 'azure blue,' 'ochraceous,' 'vermilion,' 'violet,' etc. without serious inconvenience. Indeed the use of some of these names like that of the discarded technical terms has been so abused that it is better after all to avoid them.

A complete catalogue of color names with plate reference makes it easy to find any shade that may be referred to, while an understanding of the arrangement of the plates enables one to find all the 'reds' or 'blues' without delay for purposes of comparison.

The whole plan is discussed in detail in the 'Prologue' with reference to various works dealing with the subject.

In order to avoid the possibility of variation in the tints in the individual copies, each color, for the entire edition, was painted uniformly on large sheets of paper from a single mixture of pigments, these sheets being then cut into the small oblongs which represent the colors on the plates.

Mr. Ridgway's volume forms a color standard which is about as nearly perfect as it can probably be made. It is absolutely indispensable to the working naturalist not only as a guide to the nomenclature of his own descriptions, but as a key to the descriptions of others. That it will long remain the standard work of its kind goes without saying and both naturalists and artists should be deeply grateful to Mr. Ridgway for the years of labor that he has expended upon this work.— W. S.