

do not use their own new name. It would be sad to think that the crop of subspecies were so nearly harvested that we must needs propose names that *might* be required in various contingencies!

It is interesting to note that the two races of *Dendroica dominica* occur on the island in winter in about equal numbers and that the authors "feel certain" that the Prairie Warbler does not breed on the island as has often been claimed. We trust that the present authors' services may be again available when another edition of the 'Handbook' is to be prepared as their work has been carefully and conscientiously performed.—W. S.

**McClymont's 'Essays on Early Ornithology.'**—In a handsomely printed little brochure<sup>1</sup> of limited edition, Mr. McClymont presents six short essays on early ornithological writings under the headings: 'The Rukh of Marco Polo'; 'The Penguins and the Seals of the Angra de Sam Bras'; 'The Banda Islands and the Bandan Birds'; 'The Etymology of the Name Emu'; 'Australian Birds in 1697'; and 'New Zealand Birds in 1772.' There are three plates representing a young *Casuarus unappendiculatus* in the British Museum, a reproduction of Schiffart's plate of a Cassowary, probably *C. galeatus*, published in 1725, and a Blue-faced Gannet from a specimen in the Royal Scottish Museum.

The "ruk" (or "roc") our author concludes is a combination of a myth arising from the simourgh of the Persians and the observation of some real bird possibly a sea eagle. The name "emu" or the earlier "eme" referred to the Ceram Cassowary and it is suggested that it is a Portuguese modification of the Arabic name "neama" indicating the Cassowary. The chapter on Australian birds refers to the Dutch East Indian Company expedition in 1696 which discovered not a few of the striking birds of this continent and Mr. McClymont presents strong arguments for identifying among the species referred to in journal of the voyage; the Black-necked Swan, Cape Barren Goose, Musk Duck, and Emu. The correct identification of these very early references to birds is an attractive field of research but a difficult one, as early voyagers were not well versed in ornithology, and in attempting to describe the strange birds that they encountered they were forced to make use of the names of common European species having no affinity whatever with them. With our present knowledge of the avifauna of the countries which they visited there is, however, often some casual mention of structure or habit which gives us the clue, although there is always the possibility of the species seen in early times having become extinct.

Mr. McClymont has given us an interesting bit of ornithological history and his publishers a beautiful piece of book making.—W. S.

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<sup>1</sup> Essays on Ornithology and Kindred Subjects. By James R. McClymont. M. A. Author of 'Pedralvarez Cabral,' 'Vicente Anes Pincon' (with three plates). London, Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 11 Grafton Street, New Bond Street, 1920, small quarto, 1-35.