

of the same species are settled for the summer in the surrounding country districts, showing that the movement often continues long after we are able to detect it in the open country.

Under "changes in bird life" the author speaks feelingly of the decrease, in many species; of the "improvements" which convert marsh-land breeding haunts of countless birds into city slums as the great metropolis stretches its tentacles out into the country; and the disappearance of breeding birds from city parks. The brighter side of the picture is the recent increase of certain birds due to better protection and the acceptance by many species of the compromise, offered by our suburbs, of conditions intermediate between those of the city streets and the unspoiled country.

Mr. Griscom's book is far more than a local list and it will prove a boon to ornithologists far removed from the New York City Region—indeed it should be in the hands of all field students of the birds of eastern North America.

While neither Mr. Griscom nor the writer oppose the collecting of birds when science requires it, we realize that the necessity for collecting in the eastern states at least, has been greatly lessened. Moreover we shall need in the future for our studies of migration, distribution and behaviour, vast stores of data, far more than could possibly be secured by the collecting of skins and for much of which skins would be useless. These data must come from studies of the living bird and identification of the bird must be rendered as free from error as possible. Powerful binocular glasses now bring the birds reasonably close and constitute the instrument for the work and it remains to teach the observer what characters to look for under these conditions and how to use his collected data for the best interests of ornithology. Toward these ends Mr. Griscom's little book points the way and we congratulate him upon an important piece of work well done.—W. S.

**Wardlaw Ramsay's 'Guide to the Birds of Europe and North Africa.'**—This little volume<sup>1</sup> fills one of the most conspicuous gaps in ornithological literature. For years we have had inquiries for some handbook in English that might enable bird students visiting continental Europe or the Mediterranean countries, to identify the birds that they saw. There seemed to be nothing in any language except Hartert's larger work 'Die Vögel der palaarktischen Fauna' or the still larger Dresser's 'Birds of Europe,' books which were out of the question, both on account of bulk and cost, but here we have just what people have been asking for.

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<sup>1</sup> Guide to the Birds of Europe and North Africa. By Colonel R. G. Wardlaw Ramsay, President of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1913-1918. Fellow of the Zoological Society. With a Biographical Memoir by William Eagle Clarke, LL.D. Gurney and Jackson, London: 33 Paternoster Row. Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court. 1923. i-xi + 1-355. Price 12 shillings 6 pence net.

It is in manual form and covers all of the birds found in the Palearctic region of Europe and Africa. There are brief diagnoses of the orders and families which present their most obvious characters, and descriptions with measurements of all of the species and subspecies which enter the region covered, and a detailed statement of distribution, including both the breeding and winter ranges in the case of migrants. The systematic arrangement is that of Hartert's 'Die Vögel der palaarktischen Fauna,' but the nomenclature does not always follow that work. An important feature is the addition to the English name of the French, German, Italian and Swedish vernaculars where they exist. A good index aids one in finding any desired species.

This work is of course not a book for beginners and has no artificial keys for determining species but any one familiar with the birds of Great Britain, or of the United States, and accustomed to handle any of the standard manuals will find it just what he needs when travelling in Europe or in the northern countries of Africa.

There are some points in the nomenclatural treatment which will not suit everyone especially the plan of printing the first of a series of trinomial forms—races of the same species—in heavy type and the rest in smaller size. It naturally gives the impression that their rank is different whereas they are all equal. This is especially confusing to the uninitiated in cases like that of the Canary where *Serinus canarius serinus* stands at the head of the forms, in heavy type, while *S. c. canarius* follows below, in lower case. We also object to the habit so frequent on the part of British authors of coining special names for North American birds, which are never used in America, as for example, "Water Pipit" for our *Anthus*, and "American Stint" for our Least Sandpiper, but these are really minor matters.

The late Col. Ramsay had conceived this work sometime before his death and had completed the greater part of it, but realizing that he would be unable to publish it himself he entrusted it to his friend Dr. W. Eagle Clarke to do with as he thought best. To Dr. Clarke and to Rear Admiral Stenhouse we are indebted for its prompt appearance and to the former also for a brief biographical sketch and portrait of the author, who will be remembered as president of the British Ornithologists' Union and nephew of the Marquis of Tweeddale.—W. S.

**Fitzsimmons' 'Birds of South Africa.'**—The two attractively gotten-up volumes<sup>1</sup> of this work form part of the author's 'Natural History of South Africa.' The title is unfortunately misleading as the birds are considered almost exclusively from an economic standpoint and he who

<sup>1</sup> The Natural History of South Africa. By F. W. Fitzsimmons. F. Z. S., F. R. M. S., etc. Director, Port Elizabeth Museum. Birds, in two volumes. With 10 coloured plates and numerous illustrations from photographs, etc. Longmans, Green and Co. 39 Paternoster Row, London, E. C. 4. New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. 1923. Vol. I, pp. i-xvi, + 1-288. Vol. II, pp. i-vii, + 1-323. Price \$4.00 net each volume.