

specimens which have often apparently been set out amidst natural surroundings, although these facts are not mentioned. There are also some good pictures from life of the Gannet rookeries of Bird Island and Ostriches on an Ostrich farm.

Mr. Fitzsimmons' book should accomplish much for the conservation of bird life in South Africa and we regret that its real mission could not have been brought out in the title.—W. S.

Dr. Townsend's 'Beach Grass.'—Dr. Charles W. Townsend, whose delightful volumes on Labrador and Ipswich beach have given enjoyment to so many lovers of nature and the great out doors, has just published another book¹ under the title of 'Beach Grass' which consists of further chronicles of the Ipswich dunes and uplands and is illustrated by many half-tones from photographs by the author.

While birds figure here and there throughout the text four chapters deal exclusively with bird life—'A Winter Crow Roost;' 'Courtship in Birds;' 'Hawking' and 'Swallows at Play.' The first two appeared previously in 'The Auk' and much of the third in the 'Bulletin of the Essex County Ornithological Club.' The chapter on Swallows deals with the life history of the Barn and Tree Swallows, two species especially characteristic of the sea coast, and Dr. Townsend's observations will prove most interesting reading to those who have studied these birds at other points on the Atlantic seaboard.

The description of the flock of migrants in the dune thickets in Chapter I, is a vivid picture of autumn migration as we find it near the coast, while the account of the courtship performances of the Terns is one of the best we have read. These are the more important ornithological contributions but a good index directs one to many other observations on various species of birds.

Of more general interest are the accounts of the dunes and the ice formations of winter; the tracks of birds, beasts and insects in the sand and the development of a 'forest' on a twelve acre lot of grass-land by the salt marsh. All of these are interesting, while throughout the book as we read Dr. Townsend's vivid descriptions of nature in her several garbs and under varied weather conditions, we seem to catch the salty smell of the sea, to feel the winds sweeping the sand before them and to hear the boom of the surf on the beach.—W. S.

Laimbeer's 'Birds I Have Known.'—This is the story of a man who took up bird study rather late in life as a result of a realization of the threatened destruction of many of our familiar species and who desires to tell us all about it. The key note of the volume² is the cultivation of an intimacy

¹ Beach Grass. By Charles Wendell Townsend, Boston, Marshall Jones Company. (212 Summer St., Boston) 1923. 12 mo. pp. i-xii + 1-319, 82 illustrations. Price \$3.50.

² Birds I Have Known. By Richard Harper Laimbeer. Illustrated with 50 Colored Plates and with 48 Snapshots from Life by the Author. G. W. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, The Knickerbocker Press. 1923, pp. i-xviii + 1-401. Price \$4.00.

with wild birds and methods of attracting them in which the erection of shelter and feeding stations comes in for much consideration. Naturally those birds which most readily respond to man's overtures figure most prominently in the text. The photography of birds soon occupied the author's attention and the original illustrations from his camera are excellent, many of them demonstrating his ability to reach a perfect understanding with his feathered friends, as witness the Towhee sitting on the open book that he holds in his hand and the Chipping Sparrow perched on his cigar.

The first three chapters treat of equipment and methods, etc., while chapters four to nine cover such subjects as mating, nesting, molting, migration, song, etc. When the author comments upon these topics on the basis of his personal experience his remarks are of value but when he thinks it necessary to discuss the broader problems on the basis of books he has read they are not so happy. He evidently fails to distinguish between the reliable and unreliable, or between the older and more modern works, and consequently is sometimes misled. He does not, for instance, regard the method of plumage change as proven and makes a curious statement that the Goldfinch changes color in the fall while the Bobolink and Tanager change "during the molt." Of course they all change "during the molt" but the Goldfinch being a very late breeder does not molt until much later than the other species. Molt and color change are subjects which require specimens and are thus outside the field in which the author is especially interested. Still more remarkable is his statement that some birds not only have "one suit for summer wear and one of distinctly different color for winter use, but in different parts of the country various colors may be provided." Surely he has misinterpreted what he has read in this case. Again he states that altricial birds are hatched "absolutely free from covering of any sort except the bare skin." How he could have examined so many nests without noting the natal down exhibited by most species, and so remarkable in the case of the Kingbird, it is difficult to understand. The author's occasional slur upon the literature of ornithology is not in the spirit of one interested in the advancement of knowledge and is usually quite unwarranted. For instance he says: "Any dissertation by me on bird migration based upon personal knowledge would be very brief . . .

. . . that the birds came and went away again, which if not rich in detail would be at least as authentic and as prolific of information as much that has been written . . . one guess is quite as likely to be right as another." [!]

The latter half of the book is devoted to accounts of a number of familiar Long Island birds arranged, according to the author, in alphabetical order but the fact that Blue Jay comes under "B" and Purple Grackle under "G" with other similar violations of the proposed scheme makes it difficult to find any given bird and it would have been better to follow the recognized sequence. These accounts contain many interesting original obser-

vations and much from the oft-quoted publications of the U. S. Biological Survey. It would have been better had the author also quoted his descriptions of the birds from a standard authority since the color terms used often vary so widely from those usually employed as to be confusing. His Bobolink's eggs moreover if really "white spotted with brown" must have belonged to some other species of ground nesting bird.

This work contains so much interesting and original matter that it is a pity that the manuscript could not have been read critically by some ornithologist familiar with the broader aspects of the study, but apart from slips in the more technical side of the subject it will furnish interesting reading for the popular bird student and will do much to attract others to the field that the author has found so interesting.

The book is beautifully gotten up and the half tones and the colored plates from the Audubon Society leaflets are remarkably well printed.—
W. S.

Dr. Cordier's 'Birds: Their Photographs and Home Life.'—This¹ is another of the popular 'bird books' with which the market at present seems to be filled. Dr. Cordier makes no claim for his book as a complete treatise on the birds of any given locality and only those with which he has come into photographic contact in their natural feeding and breeding haunts are considered. Dr. Cordier, moreover, wisely confines himself to his personal experiences and does not, in an attempt to cover the whole field, rehash the work of others.

Although a big game hunter himself, he seems to be unable to realize the possibilities of a similar enthusiasm on the part of a collector of birds and scores the amateur collector roundly. However we nearly all agree that today the collecting of birds in the United States, except on the part of the technical investigator or representative of the large museum, is unnecessary, but many of his strictures apply just as well to the hunter of big game animals, and not a few big game hunters have abandoned the slaughter in favor of photography.

Several chapters in Dr. Cordier's book are devoted to methods in bird photography with many useful hints about cameras, lenses, etc., and then follow accounts of trips to bird rookeries in Florida and on the Texas coast and finally sketches of the habits and habitats of various birds which the author has studied, which contain not a few notes and observations of interest, while the 140 half-tones give evidence of his ability as a photographer. The few pictures taken from chloroformed birds or dead birds had better have been omitted as they are but sorry substitutes for photographs from life and at once invite criticism.

¹ *Birds: Their Photography and Home Life.* By A. H. Cordier, M. D. With 145 illustrations from Photographs of Wild Birds by the Author. Dorrance & Co., publishers. Philadelphia (308-310 Walnut St.) 1923. pp. 1-247. Price \$4.00, post paid \$4.15.