

Thorburn's 'Game Birds and Wild Fowl.'—The collector of sumptuous works on ornithology must be delighted by the array of beautiful volumes that has recently been placed upon the market. Beside the two already noticed there is a third well worthy of the attention of the connoisseur in these works of art, and of the sportsman desirous of possessing notable works dealing with his pastime. This is Thorburn's 'Game Birds and Wild-Fowl of Great Britain and Ireland.'¹ It is a large quarto similar in style and binding to the same author's 'British Birds'² but slightly larger and includes beside the text thirty beautiful color plates by this famous artist-author representing fifty-eight species. He explains in the preface that it has not been his aim to make scientific plates of the species but to represent them grouped in their natural surroundings and his results are not only eminently successful from the sportsman's standpoint, but are beautiful contributions to art, with all the softness and effective color schemes characteristic of Thorburn's work which have been reproduced by the Sun Engraving Co. of Watford, England, with remarkable fidelity.

To give one an idea of the method of handling and grouping we may call attention to the frontispiece in which a group of five Mallards, male and female are resting and preening by a bunch of dead sedge on the marshy shore of a great river. On the left in the foreground are three Shovellers while other Mallards in mid-distance, and in the air, illustrate various poses and actions of the species. While a perfectly natural and restful group such as a lucky photographer might catch with his camera, a careful study reveals how many characteristic positions and activities of the birds the artist has depicted, and what care and thought he has given to the composition. Again we have the waters of some coastal bay with surf in the distance and in the foreground a gathering of six Scaup, eight Goldeneyes and five Long-tails, perfectly natural and yet illustrating a remarkable number of postures assumed by these birds. Another plate represents two Snipe—the Common and the Jack—at the edge of a sequestered pool surrounded by tall brown grass, each bird in a characteristic Snipe attitude. Then there is a mountain scene with bare rocky slopes and a rushing torrent near by and a group of eight Red Grouse in various attitudes, the females resting, and the old males alert and watchful, one of them with bill opened in full cry, while another plate of the same species shows a flock all on the wing, coming "down wind" against a stormy sky. So page after page these beautiful pictures of wild life delight the eye.

The text is well gotten up, based on personal experience and the writings

¹ Game Birds and Wild-Fowl of Great Britain and Ireland written and illustrated by A. Thorburn, F. Z. S. containing thirty plates in colour, showing fifty-eight species. Longmans, Green and Co. 39 Paternoster Row, London, New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras 1923. All rights reserved. Large quarto (10.5 × 14.5 ins.) pp. i-vii + 1-79, pl. 1-30. Price \$35, net, bound in red cloth with gold trimmings. (55 Fifth Ave., N. Y.)

² Noticed in 'The Auk' 1917, p. 221.

of well known authorities on the game birds while some valuable notes by Hugh Wormald on Duck plumages are made free use of. The accounts cover the distribution, habits, nesting, plumage variation, and methods of hunting, in a most satisfactory way and are beautifully printed on paper almost as heavy as that which supports the plates, making the handling of the pages very much easier.

The species included comprise all of the British Ducks, Geese and Swans, the gallinaceous birds together with the three Snipe, the Golden Plover, the Lapwing and the Curlew. The artist-author and the publishers deserve much praise for producing a remarkably beautiful and useful volume.—W. S.

Witherby's 'Practical Handbook of British Birds.'—This work¹ which has been appearing in parts ever since March 3, 1919, has been completed with the issue of Part XVIII (Vol. II, pp. 801-959) on February 26, 1924. This final part contains the conclusion of the Auks, and consideration of the Bustards, Rails, Cranes and Gallinaceous birds. Half of the text however is devoted to additions and corrections which bring the work up to the end of 1923 so far as information, nomenclature etc. are concerned; and a systematic list of British birds numbering 496 of which 208 breed or have bred in the British Isles during the past fifty years.

As completed the 'Handbook' is one of the most notable works on the birds of Great Britain that has yet appeared and the most complete technical account of the birds of any one country with which we are familiar. It presents all of the scientific facts concerning each species in concise form and clear language, without any attempt at popular writing or consideration of the habits, "life-history" or "character" of the birds. This latter phase of the subject is a perfectly legitimate and important one and has offered opportunity for the production of some of the finest pieces of ornithological literature but it is a field apart, and we think Mr. Witherby has done well to limit the present work to the hard facts of the science, as well as presenting these facts in language perfectly understandable by the laity. The reviewer has always contended that scientific facts may be presented without the use of technical language and still lose none of their force.

The generic and specific headings with their references and foot notes give one all the technical information on nomenclature contained in a

¹ A Practical Handbook of British Birds Edited by H. F. Witherby, M. B. E. F. Z. S., M. B. O. U. Editor of British Birds (Mag.). Authors of Various Sections: Ernst Hartert, Ph. D., F. Z. S., M. B. O. U., Annie C. Jackson, H. M. B. O. U. (Mrs. Meinertzhagen), Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, M. A., M. B. O. U., H. F. A. O. U., C. Oldham, F. Z. S., M. B. O. U., Norman F. Ticehurst, O. B. E., M. A., F. R. C. S., M. B. O. U. and The Editor. Vol. I. With 17 Plates and Numerous Text Figures. Witherby & Co., 326 High Holborn, London. 1920 (pp. i-viii + 1-532, text figures 117). Vol. II. With 13 Plates and Numerous Text Figures. 1924 (pp. i-xii + 1-959, text figures 211). Price bound complete £4.10.0.