

*bernieri*, the rare little teal; *Eutriorchis* was found to have lunched on a huge chameleon; *Dromoeocercus seebohmi* and *Sarothura watersi*, both names to make collectors shiver, were discovered in extremely localized areas in the mountains and are considered to be the only truly mountain forms.

Unfortunately no botanical names are associated with the food habits or habitat of the birds. It seems a pity that M. Decary could not have been with the ornithological party for a time so that such notes might have been made, but give us an inch and we want a mile. Mr. Rand has done a very good piece of work.—J. C. GREENWAY.

**Priest's 'Birds of Southern Rhodesia.'**—This<sup>1</sup> is the fourth volume, concluding the general account of the birds of Southern Rhodesia, of which the three other volumes have already been noticed in 'The Auk.' It treats of the remaining groups of Passeriformes, including fifteen families: cuckoo-shrikes, drongos, helmet-shrikes, shrikes, tits, orioles, ravens and crows, starlings, white-eyes, sunbirds, sugarbirds, tree-creepers, weavers, fringilline sparrows, and buntings. An index to the volume includes both English and Latin names. The treatment is uniform with that of the other volumes, giving first the English and current Latin name, with citation of the original description and type locality, followed by paragraphs on Distribution in Africa and in Rhodesia, then Habits and General Notes, concluding with a careful description of each of the 134 species treated. The subject matter is well arranged under these heads, and includes brief accounts of the nesting habits, eggs, food, display, with quotations from various published sources. The effort to provide each species with a vernacular name will help to crystallize usage as well as to render the subject more intelligible to the layman. The volume contains much that is of general interest. While the avifauna of Rhodesia includes few types familiar to American ornithologists, there are three species of titmice, a tree-creeper (*Salpormis*) allied to *Certhia*, crows and a few sparrows recalling our House Sparrow. Two of the tits are parasitized by a honey-guide, while the common Pied Crow, which haunts the neighborhood of man, is parasitized by the Great Spotted Cuckoo. The Wattled Starling specializes on locusts as food, feeding its young on these pests and at other seasons pursuing their swarms in flocks. The interesting relations of the two oxpeckers with large game mammals are described. These birds clamber about on their hosts in search of ticks and by their sudden departure or sharp notes, give warning of the approach of danger. The white-eyes here as elsewhere, in their fondness for sweet juices, do a certain amount of damage to soft-skinned fruits. Some of the sunbirds are found to puncture the corollas of large flowers to secure nectar at the base, but apparently never drink water. The many weaverbirds, in which a wide variety of habits obtains, are of special interest. The polygamous species such as the Red-headed Weaver (*Anaplectes*) and the Red Bishop (*Pyromelana*) stand in contrast to those that live in solitary pairs. In *Pyromelana* it is stated that female nestlings outnumber the males in significant proportion, a fact that seems correlated with polygamous habits. The striking way in which noisy colonial weavers (*Hypphantornis*) suddenly cease their racket altogether for a brief period is recalled. An interesting type of nest is described for *Plocepasser*, consisting of a rough tunnel of grass built in a thorn bush, and then the nest-end blocked up. The display flights of *Coliuspasser* and *Pyromelana* are described. The Pin-tailed Wydah (*Vidua macrura*) is definitely shown to be parasitic on its relative the waxbill, but the young bird on hatching does not eject the rightful young as do the cuckoos and others, although

<sup>1</sup> Priest, Capt. Cecil. *The Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, vol. 4. 8vo, London and Beccles, ix + 420 pp., 10 color plates, 122 text-figs., 1936. Published by William Clowes & Sons, Ltd., 94 Jermyn St., London, S.W. 1.

the parasitic parent may remove one or two eggs of its host on laying. These and many other interesting facts make the work valuable to the general reader. It is, in fact, a handbook, providing ready means of identifying the many Rhodesian species of birds, besides summing up the pioneer work in regard to their habits. It thus clears the way for much more detailed and critical studies of individual species which must next be undertaken. The ten color plates are by Grönvold while the many text-figures in black and white by N. Lighton illustrate most of the species satisfactorily with often a bit of the characteristic haunts as background. The author promises a fifth volume as an appendix, to include the more important notes that have been published since the inception of the work, as well as a general index.—G. M. A.

**William Brewster's 'October Farm.'**—In this modest little volume<sup>1</sup> lives again the spirit of William Brewster. Those of us who knew him,—even though slightly,—can never forget his charming presence, his delight in living things, his sensitiveness to all that went on about him. Blest with abundant leisure, he devoted his life to the close observation, particularly, of birds, finding the keenest pleasure in their companionship. From young manhood it was his habit to keep a journal in which he wrote full descriptive accounts of what he saw in his excursions afield. The many volumes of these manuscripts, which he bequeathed to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, form a treasurehouse of natural-history notes, from which his friend and frequent companion, the late Smith Owen Dexter, has here brought together numerous incidents relating to the birds, mammals, and reptiles of the Concord region. October Farm was the name Brewster bestowed upon his stretch of land bordering the Concord River, where stood the fine old farmhouse, with its gardens, orchard and adjacent woodlands to which during many years he was wont to repair from spring till autumn. Here he followed the progress of the annual migrations, observed the intimate habits of the nesting birds, watched the muskrats, foxes, and turtles, or listened to the mysterious sounds of night. Nothing was too trivial to arouse his interest; his quick eye and keen ear found something unusual at every turn.

As a writer, Brewster had the rare faculty of presenting in few words an entire situation. He excelled in clear and beautiful diction and in vivid and intimate description. The selections from the journals are arranged in chronological order from April, 1872, to the last day in Concord, May 14, 1919. They include a wide range of subjects: the nesting and song of the Woodcock; rare glimpses of Pied-billed Grebes; how a shrike hunts its prey; the songs of Lincoln's Sparrow; spring music; the display of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird; thoughts on migration; drumming of snipe and of grouse; night calls of the Veery; experiences with owls; the Blue Jay's destruction of birds' eggs; a remarkable friendship between a goose and a guinea-hen, both hatched by a foster-parent hen; the doings of foxes, skunks and turtles. All these tell interesting bits of the lives of these wild creatures at Concord. The volume is one that should be in the hands of every field naturalist, not only as an inspiration to accurate observation but also as a pattern in the art of describing in clear and readable fashion what he has seen in the field. One or two misspelled names of animals are excusable for the editor died ere the publication of the book, but the lack of an index is unfortunate. Quite apart from its value as a work on natural history, the literary charm of these extracts makes the book worthy of high place. It should stand on one's library shelf beside Thoreau's 'Journals' as another Concord classic.—G. M. A.

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<sup>1</sup> October Farm | from the Concord Journals | and Diaries of | William Brewster | with an introduction by | Daniel Chester French. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., small 8vo, xv + 285 pp., 4 half-tone plates. Price \$2.50.