

tains'¹ is compact and business-like, having quite the air and appearance of a scientific school manual, with its analytical keys, strictly systematic arrangement, and 'glossary.' The thorny road of technicalities is smoothed, not by omitting the technicalities, but by using them, with proper definitions and explanations, aided by cuts and diagrams when necessary. Its purpose appears to be primarily that of a school manual, and for such use seems well adapted. The subject is reduced to simple terms, and is methodically presented. Even the scientific names are marked for accent. Part I (pp. 9-38) treats of the external parts of birds and the terms needed for their description. The treatment is for the most part brief, but is abundantly illustrated by appropriate outline figures. Under the head of 'Nests and Eggs' some very good advice is given to would-be collectors, both as to the taking of eggs and the manner of the taking. Part II (pp. 39-348) treats systematically of the species, giving first a key to the families, with instructions for its use, and later, in their proper places, keys to the genera and species. About fifty to a hundred words, in large type, give the leading traits of the species, both as to color, markings and habits, the measurements and area of distribution being added in a paragraph of smaller type, to which also the various subspecies are altogether relegated. Each species is usually illustrated with a full-length wash-drawing—generally effective and helpful but rarely artistic and often quite otherwise, some of them being the worst we have seen in a modern bird book. It is on the whole very carefully compiled, and therefore trustworthy, though the paraphrasing sometimes fails to fully conceal the author's sources of information.

Part III (pp. 349-372) treats of 'The Study of Birds in the Field,' giving brief directions as to how, when and where to find birds, with keys for their identification 'in the bush,' the keys in Part II being for the identification of birds 'in the hand.' Part IV (pp. 373-389) teaches the 'Preparation of bird specimens for display or study.' This includes instructions for skinning and mounting, with illustrations, and the preparation of eggs and nests. A glossary and index conclude this very serviceable little volume, which will doubtless assist much in the introduction of bird study in schools.—J. A. A.

Cory's Ducks, Geese and Swans.²—Mr. Cory's 'How to know the

¹ Birds | of the United States | east of the Rocky Mountains | A Manual for the identification of species | in hand or in bush | By Austin C. Appgar | Author of "Trees of the Northern United States," etc. | —New York, Cincinnati, Chicago | American Book Company | —No date; copyright, 1898. Sm. 8vo, pp. 415, numerous text illustrations.

² How to know | the | Ducks, Geese and Swans | of | North America | all the Species being grouped according to Size and Color | — | By Charles B. Cory | . . . [= 4 lines of titles] . . . [= 5 lines of titles of the Author's previous books] | — | For sale by | Little, Brown & Co. | Boston | 1897 — Sm. quarto, pp. 95, with 5 plates and numerous text figures.

Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America' is modeled on the same plan as his 'How to know the Shore Birds,' noticed in a former number of this journal (Vol. XIV, Oct., 1897, p. 418). It is therefore sufficient to say that by means of keys and a very liberal use of excellent cuts in the text, the matter of identification is apparently so simplified that even the most inexperienced bird student or sportsman can hardly fail to discover the name of any bird of these groups he may chance to have in hand. It is designed especially for sportsmen and others interested in birds who find difficulty in identifying birds by the ordinary 'bird books.' The cuts, executed with great faithfulness of detail, and generally with pleasing artistic effect, can not fail to guide the reader with great ease to the species sought. The text, aside from the elaborate keys, is confined to a brief description of the external characters, with the distinctive features emphasized by special type, and short statements of the birds' distribution and nesting habits.—J. A. A.

Chapman on Mexican Birds.¹—One of the greatest difficulties in the study of Mexican Birds has been the lack of detailed reports on the avifauna of definite regions by competent ornithologists who have visited the localities in person. Most of our knowledge of the birds of this country heretofore has been obtained from collectors' specimens often so meagerly or indefinitely labelled as to leave us in great doubt as to the distribution and consequent relationship of the various species. Mr. Chapman's paper is just such a contribution as we have needed and clears up many puzzling questions relative to the birds of Jalapa—a locality long known in ornithological literature but little understood faunally. The importance of exact localities with specimens from this region can be appreciated when we learn that owing to the steepness of the mountain slopes, a few hours' ride by rail either way from Jalapa will bring us to faunæ as different as those of the northern and southern borders of the United States. "Indeed," says Mr. Chapman, "it makes a material difference in the day's collecting whether you go south or north of the city." It is no wonder then that our 'Jalapa' specimens seemed to indicate a curious mixture of life when, as Mr. Chapman shows, they came from distinct faunal zones, here only a few miles distant from one another.

In the first part of his paper the author treats of the Jalapan birds, of which 107 species are listed, accompanied by interesting annotations on their distribution, habits and songs. The second part deals with the birds of Las Vigas, in the humid alpine zone, nearly 4000 feet above the temperate zone of Jalapa, though only forty miles away in a straight line. Here 48 species were observed and interesting notes are added on the nesting season, which was here found to be much earlier than at Jalapa.—W. S.

¹ Notes on Birds Observed at Jalapa and Las Vigas, Vera Cruz, Mexico. By Frank M. Chapman. Author's Edition, extracted from Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. Vol. X, p. 15-43, Feb. 24, 1898.