

ornithologist inasmuch as the author's interests "lay away in the mountains and the plains" and he "only spent short intervals in the cities, leaving again as soon as he could possibly do so." His object he states "is a very simple one; it is to picture the scenery and natural features of the island, and to lead the reader to go to Crete." The pages are naturally full of allusions to birds, and flowers and the general aspects of nature. The beautiful song of the Blue Rock Thrush is described, the habits of the Kestrels and the trapping of Partridges in the caves of the mountains.

Among the appendices are chapters on the plants, mammals, and birds of the island. The last includes only such as were observed or obtained between March and the end of June but contains mention of species recorded by other observers and not seen by the author, while the annotations are often full.

The naturalist has much the same experience with the Cretans as with rural natives of other countries. "On the whole," says our author, "they regard one, perhaps, as rather soft-headed — as harmless, but just a little touched in the head: else why should a man be eternally digging and picking and smelling plants, or taking endless trouble to follow some tiny bird over the heated rocks and peer at it through glasses; and then, if he shoots it, not even to eat it, but only take with patient trouble its feathers and its skin! It is ridiculous." We are glad to learn, though, that "the Cretans, unlike the people of France or Italy, do not slaughter the small birds."

The half-tone illustrations and the map are excellent and the book is as attractive in appearance as it is interesting to read.— W. S.

Hartert's 'Die Vögel der paläarktischen Fauna.'¹— In the present installment of this important work the consideration of the *Strigidae* is completed and the *Falconidae* treated in full, with a few pages on the *Aquilidae* (= *Buteonidae*). We note the following new forms, *Bubo bubo swinhoei*, Kinkiang, China; *Athene noctua lilith*, Der-ez-Zor, and *Falco tinnunculus dacotiae*, Eastern Canaries (Lanzarote).

Tyto Billberg is used for the Barn Owls and *Strix* for the Barred Owls and the nomenclature follows the International Code in all respects. Two cases are left undecided, i. e., *Aegolius* vs. *Cryptoglaux* and *Athene* vs. *Carine* which depend upon the 'one letter rule,' the question being whether *Aegolia* and *Athene* of earlier date render invalid the two above names. The trinomial system as in previous parts of the work is carried to the extreme, in the reduction of many widely separated forms to subspecies. The Merlin for instance becomes a subspecies of our Pigeon Hawk or to be more exact they are both grouped as subspecies under the binomial term *Falco columbarius*. So also our Barn Owl becomes *Tyto alba pratincola*, all the Barn Owls of the world being considered as subspecies of *T. alba*.

¹ Die Vögel der paläarktischen Fauna. Systematische Übersicht der in Europa, Nord-Asien und der Mittelmeerregion vorkommenden Vögel. Von Dr. Ernst Hartert. Heft VIII (Bd II., 2). Berlin, August 1913.

We trust that this invaluable work of reference on palæarctic birds will be pushed to an early completion.— W. S.

Economic Value of Wild Birds in South Africa.— Dr. H. E. Warren, Director of the Natal Museum has recently published¹ an instructive summary of the relation of South African birds to agriculture. Dr. Warren comments on the abundance of birds in certain European countries and attributes their numbers in large part to the prevalence of hedges which furnish shelter and nesting sites. A noticeable scarcity of birds in South Africa is thought to be due to excessive clearing, the lack of hedges, and to the destructive activities of native and white boys.

The following groups of birds are said to be beneficial: owls, kestrels, the Tetraonidæ, coucals, woodpeckers, barbets, hoopoes, Caprimulgidæ, rollers, and cuckoos. Special mention is made of locust birds, including the white stork, the white-bellied stork, pratincoles, wattled starling and the hadadah ibis. Other groups coming in for commendation are the plovers, lapwing, cranes, the secretary-bird, ground hornbill, kites and certain other birds-of-prey. The birds mentioned as injurious include bulbuls, mouse-birds, and the pied starling.— W. L. M.

Bird Enemies of Diabroticas.— Two of the recent contributions from the U. S. Bureau of Entomology, published in the new series of Bulletins of the Department of Agriculture contain notes on the bird enemies of destructive beetles. The southern corn rootworm (*Diabrotica duodecimpunctata*), the adult of which is usually known as the spotted cucumber beetle, is a serious pest. High percentages of the stand of corn in some localities are damaged and this in addition to losses among cucurbit and other crops contribute to a total damage amounting to many thousands of dollars. The ubiquitous beetle responsible for this mischief is eaten by many birds. A list of 24 species furnished by the Biological Survey is published² by Professor F. M. Webster, the author of the two bulletins here mentioned.

A closely related beetle, the western corn rootworm (*Diabrotica longicornis*), causes the same sort of damage as its congener, and to a corresponding extent in its more limited range. The Biological Survey was able to furnish³ the names of only two bird enemies of this pest, namely the night-hawk and the wood pewee.— W. L. M.

Shelford's 'Animal Communities in Temperate America.'⁴— With the chief exceptions of investigations in Michigan under Adams and

¹ Agr. Journ. of South Africa. VI, No. 3. Sept. 1913, pp. 461-465.

² Bull. No. 5, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Sept. 1913, p. 9.

³ Bull. No. 8, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Sept. 1913, p. 6.

⁴ Shelford, V. E. Animal Communities in Temperate America as illustrated in the Chicago region. Bull. No. 5, Geog. Soc. of Chicago, October, 1913, 362 pp.