

## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Saunders' 'Manual of British Birds.'** A third edition of this classic work<sup>1</sup> has just been published under the able editorship of Dr. W. Eagle Clarke who has brought it strictly up to date, adding such species and races as have occurred within the limits of the work since the last edition, and such additional information on distribution and habits as has been recorded.

The original edition, published in 1885, was conceived by the late Howard Saunders who had just completed editing the fourth edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds' and who realized the desirability of condensing the information contained in that work into a single volume, and in that manner make it available to a much larger number of students. The 'Manual' is thus as it were a lineal descendant of Yarrell's famous treatise. Many of the original Yarrell line cuts have been preserved though some of the birds have been redrawn by Lodge and half-tone cuts of additional species have been made from drawings by Grönvold.

The life histories are remarkably full when we consider that not more than two pages are allotted to a species, and that descriptions, measurements and exact records of rare occurrences are included. After the English name is given, in the heading, the modern trinomial name and a satisfactory binomial for those who do not desire to use trinomials, and finally in heavy type the character of the birds occurrence: "A Summer Visitant," "An Accidental Visitant," etc.

Of course the many technical details and full description of seasonal plumages so admirably covered in Witherby's modern 'Handbook' are not attempted in this work but it furnishes all the information that the average British bird lover or visiting ornithologist would desire and preserves the historic touch by perpetuating the names of Yarrell and Saunders so closely identified with the study of British birds.—W. S.

**A British Pocket Bird Book.** The author, Mr. Edmund Sandars, explains the object of this little volume<sup>2</sup> in the same clear and terse fashion in which he presents his subject, viz.: "The book was made for myself and is published in the belief that others may want what I wanted, namely, first, a book really small enough to carry in the pocket, with a text in clear type, but condensed to the utmost; secondly, drawings on

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<sup>1</sup> Manual of British Birds. By Howard Saunders. Third Edition revised and enlarged by William Eagle Clarke, I. S. O., LL. D., with 405 figures of species. Gurney and Jackson. London: 33 Paternoster Row, E. C. Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court, 1927, pp. i-viii + 1-834. Price 30 shillings net.

<sup>2</sup> A Bird Book for the Pocket. Treating of all the regular British species with coloured plates to scale and an illustrated chapter on eggs. By Edmund Sandars. Oxford University Press. London: Humphrey Milford. 1927, pp. i-xix + 1-246. Price \$3.00 [American Branch, Oxford Press, New York, N. Y.].

the page facing the text and accurate enough in color, form and size to avoid the need for long descriptions; and thirdly, all the birds, for better comparison, shewn in more or less the same position."

He has succeeded admirably in the rather difficult task that he set himself, and manages to include notes on distribution, nest, song, food, plumages, flight, gait and manners in the page or half page devoted to each species. A novel simplification in the scientific names is the use of square and cube signs where a name is repeated or tripled as for instance *Troglodytes*<sup>3</sup> in place of *Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes* for the Wren. The colored figures are made by a new process, printed on the ordinary text paper, and, while somewhat vivid in certain cases, give a sufficiently accurate idea of the coloration to make descriptions unnecessary. The drawings are often crude but the author's plan is to present a "map" of the bird rather than a work of art.

These pocket keys are of the greatest value in helping the beginner to a knowledge of birds and this is one of the best that we have seen. Reed's 'Bird Guides' for American birds have filled the same field in this country but Mr. Sandars has given the matter more thought and has included a greater amount of data in his text.—W. S.

**Fifty Winter Birds of the Northeastern United States.** Colored pictures of our birds are always a desideratum. Fifty years ago it was possible to purchase such pictures of British birds published, as we recall it, by Marcus Ward Co., of London. Many a boy in those days longed for a similar set of cards of our native birds, a want that at a much later day was met in part by the colored pictures of stuffed birds published under the title "Birds," by the Nature Publication Co. of Chicago, and by small cards distributed as cigarette advertisements, while still later came the admirable leaflets of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Now this Society has issued a set of fifty cards<sup>1</sup> exactly on the plan of the Marcus Ward cards but much superior, the pictures being reproductions of paintings by Allan Brooks with a short account of the habits and distribution of each species on the reverse side of the card.

The set covers the winter birds of the northeastern states and the species selected are in the main excellent, although the Mockingbird and Red-bellied Woodpecker and perhaps the Cardinal, Carolina Wren and Tufted Tit, belong rather to the country south of the "Northeastern states," though it all depends upon where one draws the line; while the Siskin, Dove and Marsh Hawk might well have been included. The only serious criticism that can well be made is the inclusion of the Goldfinch in full summer plumage as a winter resident, with no mention of the somber garb that it assumes at this season of the year.

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<sup>1</sup> 50 Winter Birds of the Northeastern United States from Color Drawings by Allan Brooks. Published by the National Association of Audubon Societies. 1974 Broadway, New York City. Sold in Sets. Price \$1.00.