

Atkinson's 'Henry Thoreau the Cosmic Yankee.'—The ever increasing numbers of readers of Thoreau will be much interested in this discussion¹ of his "thought, poetry and character." Thoreau wrote of himself "You may rely upon it that you have the best of me in my books and that I am not worth seeing personally." Mr. Atkinson emphasizing the fact of his dual personality, tells us that "with the exception of Emerson's all too brief memorial we have not a single reliable full length portrait of Thoreau from his contemporaries," and then, taking the man at his word, he proceeds to study his life and character through his writings, especially his journals.

The little book is well written and holds one's interest as the author discusses his subject's character and personality, his absorbing interests and his views upon life, touching now and again upon incidents in his life—his intense love for Concord, his life by Walden Pond, etc.

From the very nature of the case opinions of Thoreau are bound to differ but Mr. Atkinson is doubtless correct when he says: "No matter how highly we may esteem Thoreau as the herald of the millennium or how closely we may come to the radiance of his thought, I am sure most of us would have found him a refractory person."

While he was far more than a chronicler of nature, that side of his work has been so emphasized, that ornithologists are wont to regard him largely as a student of birds and nature, and most readers of 'The Auk' will want to add this volume to their Thoreau library shelf.—W. S.

Shepard's 'The Heart of Thoreau's Journals.'—The Thoreau journals comprising thirty-nine manuscript volumes and already the source of several compilations such as 'Early Spring in Massachusetts,' 'Summer,' 'Winter,' and 'Autumn' were published in their entirety, in 1906, by Houghton, Mifflin Co., under the able editorship of Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen.

The present volume² is an attempt to gratify the wish of many a reader of Thoreau to have the best things in the 7000 pages of the Journals more readily available, where they could be found at a moment's notice. The compiler also argues that what is now necessary in order that Thoreau may come at last into his full fame and influence, is the publication of the best of his writings in convenient compass.

The result of Mr. Shepard's efforts in this line is eminently satisfactory and here in one small volume we find the paragraphs and sentences "in which Thoreau is most fully and triumphantly himself." Furthermore an unusually good index has been prepared in which one can scarcely fail to find any desired paragraph by looking under a probable subject heading.

¹ Henry Thoreau the Cosmic Yankee. By J. Brooks Atkinson. Alfred A. Knopf. New York, 1927. pp. 1-158. Price \$2.50.

² The Heart of Thoreau's Journals. Edited by Odell Shepard. Boston and New York Houghton Mifflin Company. The Riverside Press, Cambridge. 1927, pp. i-xiii + 1-348. Price \$3.00.

Mr. Shepard has performed a service not only to the admirers of Thoreau but to Thoreau himself by thus spreading a better knowledge of the man as one of the great American authors.—W. S.

Raven's 'The Ramblings of a Bird Lover.'—The author of this readable little book¹ tells us that it: "was written for the joy of it, and with no ulterior motive except the hope that something of that joy may be passed on." He then describes his experiences in bird photography—the recreation in this case of a Canon of the Church—and all who have a similar love of nature and of bird study will follow his accounts with pleasure and profit, while the bird photographer will experience many a thrill at the success of a fellow enthusiast.

The fields of the author's activities are the coasts and uplands of England and Scotland, with a trip one summer to Holland to visit the Burdets. In the eleven chapters, sixteen land and thirty-two water-birds are discussed while the book is illustrated with thirty half-tone plates presenting sixty-seven photographs by the author.

Dr. Raven is a good observer and a scholarly writer and has made a valuable contribution to the life histories of the birds he has studied, as well as providing an entertaining book for the general reader. Bird students in any country will find his volume a welcome addition to their libraries.—W. S.

Taverner on Red-tailed Hawks.—In this paper Mr. Taverner presents the results of his studies of the Red-tailed Hawks, especially those of Canada. Unlike previous attempts to satisfactorily explain the variations in these perplexing birds, Mr. Taverner's study is based to a great extent upon breeding individuals sometimes accompanied by young, which renders his conclusions much more accurate.

He states that the Red-tail acquires a "juvenile" plumage upon leaving the nest, and retains it until the annual molt, of the next summer, approximately fifteen months. He, moreover, doubts that any individuals breed in this plumage and is of the opinion that the first nesting occurs when the birds are two years old.

The eastern and western Red-tails are distinct geographical subspecies, the former (*borealis*) having but a single phase of plumage, while the latter (*calurus*) has two—a light and a dark or melanistic phase. The dark phase, moreover, as often happens in cases of melanism, is somewhat local.

The more or less black Harlan's Hawk, *Buteo borealis harlini*, the distribution of which does not conform to any definite geographic area, Mr. Taverner regards as identical with the melanistic phase of *calurus*, and the name being the older of the two, he claims that it should prevail for the Western Red-tail. The black and white Krider's Hawk, *Buteo borealis*

¹The Ramblings of a Bird Lover. By Charles E. Raven, D.D. Canon of Liverpool and Chaplain to the King. Illustrated with sixty-seven photographs by the author. London: Martin Hopkinson & Co. Ltd. 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W. C. 1927, pp. i-xvi + 1-186. Price 10 shillings 6 pence net.