

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 volume¹ 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.

¹ 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.