congratulated on the mechanical excellence of the completed volume.

J. S. Plaskett

Dominion Observatory, Ottawa,
October, 1911

Photography for Bird-Lovers: a Practical Guide. By Bentley Beetham, F.Z.S. With Photographic Plates. London. 1911. Pp. i–vi + 122.

This handy little volume is designed to serve as a manual and guide in bird-photography in its widest sense, and while addressed to beginners in the art, and to lovers of birds and of sport rather than to ornithologists and trained naturalists, all interested in birds will find in it much to attract them. More particularly, the expressed object of the author is to show how pictures of birds, whether dead or alive, captive or free, can be best obtained, rather than to direct the steps of his reader into the paths of the naturalist, to show him how to study, and to use his camera as a tool for recording and supporting his observations.

In every such work we should like to see it clearly stated that the higher object of bird-photography is not simply to "embody a little story," or even "to portray the living bird in some characteristic pose or action," though this be all very well, but rather to obtain a pictorial analysis of behavior, as registered in all the more characteristic movements and attitudes, made or assumed by birds. This, 'tis true, is a subject which requires ample leisure as well as training and skill, but one, it would seem, in which many young students, who, happily possessing the former, might be led to acquire the latter, and thus to extend the boundaries of knowledge. We think that the attitude of any author could be raised to this plane without loss in interest, and with decided gain in value.

Some of Mr. Beetham's specimen illustrations, and particularly the habitat pictures, which show the nest or bird with its surroundings, could hardly be improved, such as the oyster catcher's eggs on page 28, or the grouse on page 56, obtained by setting the camera very low down. I think, however, that the value to students of all really excellent photographs of this character would be enhanced by adding, either on the page or at the end of the book, the essential photographic data, a thing usually neglected.

If one were disposed to be critical, though we hope, not hypercritical, he could find more exercise of this power in the longest and most important chapter in the book, that on the use of the concealing tent. The present reviewer, so far as he knows, was the first to use a *bona fide* unadorned tent for the close at hand study of birds, in the summer of 1899, so that perhaps he is a little over keen on the subject. In a work on the "Home Life of Wild Birds," published in 1901 and again in 1905, the bird-tent was fully described and illustrated, with an exposition of the psychological principles governing its use. Many were inclined to look askance upon our tent and methods in 1901, but no attempt seems ever to have been made to dispute the principles at stake. All this, however, is a matter of history, and we are now interested to see that our tent has become a fixture for the intimate study of nest-life, and further that at the end of this very volume a "hiding tent" is advertised for sale by a London dealer. To continue, the present writer's tents, plain and unadorned, have been in use—one of them at least—for twelve years, and with them he has worked at the close range of 70 nests, pertaining to from 30 to 40 species of wild birds, often spending a week at a given one. Further, since accidents from every cause, including the weather and living enemies, have hardly exceeded one in ten, and can be reduced to almost nothing by a proper use of the wire screen whether the original position of a nest is changed or not—he should be qualified to speak on the score of experience at least.

The use of the concealing tent is indeed based upon certain fundamental principles, the force of which experiments in the field, year after year, have only tended to confirm. While any detailed discussion of them would be quite out of place here, we might intimate that the most important are the gradual rise of the "parental instincts," and consequent depression of fear, most marked from the beginning of incubation, the force of habit, and

the freedom with which new habits are formed. All procedure is to be directed upon this basis, with variations, if need be, to suit the species or the individual and the state of its instincts at the time. We know, for instance, when to successfully approach with the tent the cuckoo or the cedar waxwing, when, the herring gull or the tern, for experiment has shown how they may be expected to behave under certain conditions. We have never found "concealing the tent," to which Mr. Beetham devotes a section, necessary, when the element of time was no object, two hours being usually enough to indicate the character of approach permissible. Nor have we ever needed "dummy cameras," nor had to consider "a comfortable position," when using the tent. So far as comfort is concerned, we cut the Gordian knot long ago, and should never think of using anything but a commodious tent, in which any one can stand, sit, write or read at ease, and be as comfortable as the temperature will permit.

If birds are to become accustomed to the tent itself, any question as to its size, form, or even color is of little consequence to them. The occasional nesting of many kinds of birds in incongruous, noisy, or even dangerous situations surely ought to have made this fact clear. A wall-tent of convenient size, such as we have always used, supported by a compact folding frame, guyed and pinned below, is certainly the best model for general use.

With many species indeed, an abrupt approach with a plain, unadorned tent is permissible, whether the original position of the nest be changed or not, while in other cases a more gradual access, with the use of a certain degree of finesse, is as clearly demanded for complete and assured success. In any case our procedure will depend very largely upon the strength of the parental instincts, or the condition of eggs or young. The depression of fear and consequent rise of the brooding and other instincts is expressed by fairly definite curves in a given species, and in entire ignorance of such conditions it would be hazardous to pitch any sort of a tent within a few feet of any nest, particularly when there were eggs, and fresh ones at that. On the other hand most birds with advanced young can be easily approached with the tent, without effort to conceal it, whatever the nest's position. In such cases the point is, not to cover the tent with leaves and other "familiar objects," but to make it a familiar object itself, a part of the landscape, as it were; in many cases the birds come to alight on it as they would upon rock or tree. Instinct may excite fear in the unfamiliar, but then habit commonly steps in to allay it, and that often in a surprisingly short time.

Mr. Beetham's experience with the lapwing is instructive, and one which has been repeated many times when we have been working with gulls, cedar waxwings and other wild species. In this instance the fear of a timid bird is gradually allayed by habit, until it becomes indifferent to sounds of whatever violence, and although close to the fixed eye of the camera, it is not readily driven off unless by some decisive movement, as by striking the wall of the tent or waving a hand outside. In all such cases, however, the obvious corollary does not seem to have been drawn, namely, use a tent of convenient size, and trust to habit to "conceal" it.

The author's chapters on work upon cliffs by the aid of ropes, and upon the rapid photography of birds in flight are excellent, but we should have liked more explicit information on the subject of cinematography, or the making of "moving pictures" of birds, since this is a subject about which very few naturalists are informed, in this country at least; ordinarily one might as well consult a graven image for the desired information as any oracle of a trust-controlled business. My own experience in the field has shown that moving pictures to record the activities of life at the nest are readily made, provided the birds have been subjected to the proper training, after methods which we worked out many years ago, when no muffling of the machine, or dummy "musical box," such as the author describes, is commonly necessary: nor should we ever think of covering the protruding legs

of the tripod with vegetation, for, if the reader will transpose,

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

FRANCIS H. HERRICK

Travels in the Confederation (1783–1784). From the German of Johann David Schoepf. Translated and edited by ALFRED J. MORRISON. Philadelphia, William J. Campbell. 1911. 2 vols. $6.00.

Few, if any, of the early travelers through America showed a wider mental grasp on matters falling under their observation than did Dr. Johann David Schoepf, a surgeon to the Bavarian troops employed by the British government in their vain attempts at subduing the unruly Americans during the war of the Revolution, and who subsequent to the declaration of peace made, for that period, extensive journeys through the eastern and southeastern United States. Schoepf was no mere specialist. His training had been broad and he lived at a time when it was possible for one mind to grasp and perhaps master the essentials in all branches of science. That he was a man of more than ordinary powers of observation and scientific acumen is evident from his published writings, which cover a wide range in ethnology, meteorology, biology, botany and geology. He was, according to Goode, the author of the first special ichthyological paper ever written in America or concerning American species, while his "Beyträge zur mineralogischen Kenntniss des ostlichen Theils von Nord Amerika" (1787) was the best systematic record of the geology of the eastern United States that had appeared up to date. The breadth of the man, however, is nowhere shown to better advantage than in the work now under review. "I willingly admit," he wrote, "that these notes are neither so complete nor of such importance as I could wish, but . . . to be candid, the motive of my journey was curiosity."

Whatever the motive, it is difficult to conceive of his getting into readable form and in a limited space a greater amount of information on a variety of subjects than here, and a hearty vote of thanks is due Dr. Morrison for thus bringing to life, resurrecting, as one may say, a story of travel which might otherwise remain inaccessible to most readers and hence be forgotten.

After seven years of garrison duty Schoepf began his *Reise* in July, 1783, by boarding a flat-bottomed water craft known as a "petty augur" bound for Elizabethtown, New Jersey; thence by various modes of conveyance he proceeded through the state into Pennsylvania as far west as Pittsburgh and southward into Maryland, across the Potomac into Virginia, the Carolinas and from Charleston by boat to Florida, returning by way of the Bermudas to Europe. His narrative is in form of an itinerary and is really extraordinary in its detail. No object or item was too small for his consideration, or apparently too large for his comprehension. He noted the general physical features of the country passed over, its climate, mineral productions, soil, vegetation, animal life and the cities and towns and their manner of government. The character of the people and their personal idiosyncrasies are discussed in a way comparable only with the later writings of Featherstonhaugh in his "Journey through the Slave States" (1839), though from a less cynical standpoint. He seemed not favorably impressed by the German farmers of Pennsylvania. "They give their children no education." "Their conversation is neither interesting nor pleasing." With the people of Virginia he is likewise disposed to be critical, but considers their objectionable characteristics as in part due to the debasing influence of slavery. The Assembly he did not find impressive. "Among the orators here is a certain Mr. Henry." (Presumably Patrick—he of "Give me liberty or give me death" fame.) "He has a high-flown and bold delivery, deals more in words than reasons, etc." Charleston, South Carolina, in spite of a climate which he states makes it in spring a paradise, in summer a hell, and in autumn a hospital, is described as one of the finest of American cities, and, Philadelphia excepted, inferior to none.