

## Our Bookshelf.

- (1) *Hampshire*. By T. Varley. (Cambridge County Geographies.) Pp. xi+212. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922.) 3s. 6d. net.
- (2) *Munster*. Pp. xii+176. (3) *Ulster*. Pp. xii+186. (The Provinces of Ireland.) Edited by George Fletcher. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1921.) 6s. 6d. net each.
- (4) *A History of the County of Bedford*. (The Victoria History of the Counties of England.) Part 1, *Geology and Palaeontology*. Pp. 36. (London: Constable and Co. Issued in parts, 1920.) 3s. 6d. net.

(1) MR. VARLEY'S volume is one of the excellent series of the Cambridge County Geographies. The general plan of the series is followed, successive chapters being devoted to different aspects of the county, relief, geology, hydrography, natural history, climate, people, place-names, occupations, history, architecture, and so forth, concluding with a gazetteer of towns and villages. There are a number of illustrations and coloured orographical and geological maps. The maps include the Isle of Wight, which otherwise is outside the scope of the book, but unfortunately they stop short at the county boundaries. This seems to be a needless curtailment of their usefulness. The volume is an excellent handbook to the county and is full of information, but it certainly would be improved by an index. Two criticisms may be offered, which apply rather to the scheme of the series than to this useful volume in particular. The treatment of England by counties can never be completely satisfactory, as it inevitably cuts across geographical regions. Thus the omission of eastern Wiltshire cuts out part of the Avon valley, while the inclusion of the northern slope of the Hampshire downs includes a fragment of country that would be better treated with Berkshire. The other criticism refers to the use of the term geography, as applicable to the book. Since the series claims to be geographical, there should be more correlation of various distributions than is actually the case in the pages; causal effects are not sufficiently emphasised. This is particularly the case with regard to the distribution of population and the sites of towns.

(2) and (3) These volumes are on much the same plan, but they do not claim to be geographies, although in some respects the two volumes are more geographical than the English one. The coloured maps are not strictly confined to the area under consideration, and the regions treated being large, if not always naturally defined, lend themselves to more satisfactory treatment. There is no gazetteer of towns and villages, but a full index to each volume. The books should find a wide acceptance in giving a trustworthy and impartial account of Ireland.

(4) The well-known Victoria History is now published in parts, each of which may be purchased separately. It is thus possible to obtain a full but concise memoir on the geology, botany, zoology, occupations, etc., of each of the counties, furnished with coloured maps by Bartholomew. The separate parts for some thirty counties are now on sale. Many readers whose interests do not embrace all aspects of county lore will be grateful to the publishers for this means of making accessible the scholarly articles of the Victoria History.

*A Synopsis of the Accipitres (Diurnal Birds of Prey)*. Part 1 (Vultur to Accipiter). Part 2 (Erythrotriorchis to Lophoæetus). Part 3 (Herpetotheres to Pernis). By H. Kirke Swann. Second edition, revised and corrected throughout. Pp. 1-63, 65-122, 123-178. (London: Wheldon and Wesley, Ltd.) 6s. each part.

THE work issued in 1920 as "A Synoptical List of the Accipitres" has now reappeared in an enlarged and revised form under the above title. The new edition affords original descriptions of a number of new sub-species; includes others which have appeared elsewhere; gives the type-species of each genus; the type localities of each species; and, alas, further changes in nomenclature. The Synopsis will be most appreciated by those who have some knowledge on the subject, for the extreme brevity of its descriptions of the ordinal, generic, specific, and sub-specific characters will not be of much help to the general student. The diagnostic characters of the species are restricted to adult plumages, and leave untouched the immature stages, which are the most difficult of all. The treatment of the geographical range of the various forms is also very brief.

A monograph of the Accipitres is an admitted desideratum, and as Mr. Kirke Swann has evidently devoted much attention to their study, perhaps he will supply the want. Such a treatise dealing with the plumages, distribution and life-histories would be much appreciated, especially as the birds of this order are among the most attractive and interesting of the class Aves.

*Life-histories of North American Gulls and Terns. Order Longipennes*. By Arthur Cleveland Bent. Bulletin No. 113. (Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum.)

THIS is the second instalment of an important work on the life-histories of North American birds—the first of which, dealing with the order Pygopodes, has already been noticed in NATURE.

In this volume Mr. Bent, who possesses an intimate personal knowledge of the birds of the order Longipennes, gained during extensive travels as well as in the laboratory, has been fortunate in securing the co-operation of a number of field-naturalists; and their combined experiences, supplemented by important published matter, has resulted in a remarkable series of life-histories of the fifty species of gulls and terns which are members of the Nearctic avifauna.

Under the description of each of the birds there are sections devoted to habits, nesting, eggs, young, plumages, food, behaviour, and distribution. All of these are treated in an interesting manner, and are made further attractive by a series of beautiful coloured plates, 38 in number, depicting the eggs of each species; while a second series of 77 plates, from photographs, illustrate breeding colonies, sitting-birds, nests, chicks in down, half-feathered young, and haunts. The work, apart from the absence of coloured figures of the adult birds themselves, is wonderfully complete, and is a valuable contribution to ornithological literature.