

NOTES, REVIEWS AND COMMENTS.

*CHAPMAN'S HANDBOOK OF BIRDS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA.

If supply may be taken as an index of demand, the large number of books upon ornithology which have appeared within the last few years furnishes an encouraging proof of a growing desire for closer acquaintance with bird life, both on the part of the nature-lover and of the scientific student. Probably no book that has appeared for a long period is so well fitted to satisfy the needs of both these classes as the one whose title has just been quoted. Accuracy and fullness of description, covering all external characters, including every phase of seasonal and sexual plumage in each species, have been attained without an undue use of technical language; and these specific descriptions alternate throughout the body of the work with delightful sketches of the habits of each bird. Many of the life-histories are from such well known writers as Mrs. Olive Thorne Miller, Miss Florence Merriam, William Brewster, Ernest E. Thompson, Bradford Torrey, etc.

The author is by profession a closet naturalist, but his chapter on "The Study of Birds out of Doors" can only have been written by one who is a lover, as well as a student, of birds, and whose acquaintance with them must have begun at a period when professional methods and closet work were as yet matters of the future. Still the curator of the museum comes to the surface in the following recommendation: "If you would name birds without a gun, by all means first visit a museum and with text-book in hand study those species which you have previously found [by reference to the nearest local list] are to be looked for near your home. This preliminary introduction will serve to ripen your acquaintance in the field." One field student can remember how a preliminary acquaintance with a row of mounted birds standing "at attention" on the shelf of a museum has only served to deaden the

* Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America—with Keys to the Species and Descriptions of their Plumages, Nests and Eggs, their Distribution and Migrations, &c. &c. &c. By Frank M. Chapman, Assistant Curator of the Department of Mammalogy and Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, &c. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1895. 12 mo., xiv. + 421 pp.