



A WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF SCIENCE.

“To the solid ground
Of Nature trusts the mind which builds for aye.”—WORDSWORTH.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1914.

OUR RARER BIRDS.

Field-studies of Some Rarer British Birds. By John Walpole-Bond. Pp. x+305. (London: Witherby and Co., 1914.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

THE scope of the volume before us is well indicated by its title. Mr. Bond, indeed, keeps us from first to last in the open air observing the habits of the birds and discovering the secrets of their nests. Now the author is at home in the south-east of England, now he visits well-loved haunts in Wales; or, again, he wanders further afield—to the wild coast of Ireland, to the fastnesses of the Central Highlands, or to the moors of Orkney. It is evident that Mr. Bond writes about no mere holiday excursions, but that he has been able to give much time to field ornithology, and has travelled far and wide throughout our islands in its pursuit.

The birds which have been chosen for treatment do not all in like degree deserve the title “rare.” A few, indeed, are merely rather restricted in their distribution—either from natural cause or owing to human persecution. But although the needless destruction of many of our most interesting birds comes in for just censure, there is a brighter side to the picture: the golden eagle is well protected in Scotland, our buzzard population is estimated at more than four hundred and fifty pairs; the raven and the peregrine hold their own in the remoter districts; the hobby is more numerous than is generally supposed; the decrease of the chough is not attributed to human agencies; while the gadwall is an *addition* to our native avifauna.

In these days of nature photography, very excellent in its way, it is something of a relief to

find a bird-book that is able to stand on the merits of text alone. But at the same time we become more exacting as to literary form, and therein discover our author’s failing. The extraordinary number of parenthetical and other interpolated clauses gives a disjointed and inconsequent effect to a style already loose. One has the impression, indeed, that a horde of new details has been added at the last moment without any attempt at recasting the sentences. This is a grave fault, for it does much to mar the reader’s pleasure while constantly “side-tracking” his interest. Nevertheless, Mr. Bond has much to tell that few know, but that many will gladly learn.

SCIENCE AND THE FARMER.

- (1) *A Pilgrimage of British Farming, 1910-1912.* By A. D. Hall. Reprinted by permission from the *Times*. Pp. xiii+452. (London: John Murray, 1913.) Price 5s. net.
- (2) *Soils and Crops; With Soils Treated in Reference to Crop Production.* By Prof. T. F. Hunt and Prof. C. W. Burkett. Pp. xiii+541. (New York: Orange Judd Co.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1913.) Price 7s. 6d. net.
- (3) *Manures and Fertilisers.* By Prof. H. J. Wheeler. Pp. xxi+389. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1913.) Price 7s. net.

(1) “TO see himself as others see him” is nowadays very much the fate of the man who lives in the country and gets his living by agriculture. He has only to open his morning paper to find some speech or article by some prominent person setting forth the good or bad conditions under which he and his labourers live, and propounding some remedy for the evils described.