

vegetation and climate is particularly interesting for it shows the special problems with which the birds have to contend, and the reasons for their local movements. The coloured plates, contributed by benefactors, are outstanding. There are also half-tone plates and drawings, and an excellent map.

Though by title a local book, *Birds of Cyprus* will have universal appeal.

V. B.

**GREAT MIGRATIONS.** By GEORGES BLOND. Translated from the French by A. H. Brodrick. Hutchinson of London. 16s.

Monsieur Blond and his excellent translator give us an account mainly of the movements of six creatures—grey lag goose, salmon, European eel, American bison, locust and lemming—but other natural histories are brought in; one of the strangest being that of the grunions. These little fish arrive year after year during the three nights after the full moon in May and June, to mate on the edge of the sandy Californian beach. They tell the exact moment of each high tide with greater accuracy than any man-made instrument and only thus are able to perpetuate their kind.

Under "Buffalo trails" we read the story of the elimination of the American bison, a story of human malevolence. Not only was the bison destroyed with the utmost cruelty, by building rings of fire around waterholes during droughts for example, but, when the Indians, who depended on the bison for food, strove for preservation, the bison's destruction was demanded as a means of solving the "Indian problem". M. Blond quotes from Martin S. Garretson, founder of the American Bison Society, the words of General Sheridan, commander in the south-west, as he hastened to the capital on hearing that Texas was about to adopt conservation laws: "You should on the contrary congratulate the skin hunters and give each one of them a bronze medal with, on one side, the image of a dead bison and on the other that of a distressed Indian."

In considering the extraordinary history of the European and American eels, their breeding in the Sargasso Sea and their migrations to the European and American coasts, M. Blond describes somewhat imaginatively the return of the European eels to their Sargasso nursery. I am glad he emphasizes that there is no actual evidence of this return, for doubt has just been thrown upon it by the investigations of Dr. D. W. Tucker, of the British Museum (Natural History). Dr. Tucker believes

that the American and European eels are environmental forms of one species, differentiated according to the place where they are spawned and developing differently according to whether ocean currents bear them quickly from the Sargasso to American coasts or slowly to Europe. According to this theory only the Americans return to breed, the European stock die trying to return to the Sargasso, but are regularly replenished from it.

I found this book very interesting and enjoyable. Parts of it are anthropomorphical but very seldom too much so for my taste. The illustrations are good.

C. L. B.

THE CHERRY KEARTON ANIMAL BOOK. Published by  
Hutchinson of London. 12s. 6d.

When I was a child the name of Cherry Kearton was one to be conjured with in the realm of animal stories. With what pleasure, then, I turned to *The Cherry Kearton Animal Book*, a collection of stories drawn from four of the author's books and illustrated with his own photographs.

Would the magic still hold? Alas, I discovered that in the intervening years some of the bloom had rubbed off. I found myself being irritated by such small things as a leopard's grunt being described as "horrible", a female spider being given the title "Mrs." and pictures with facetious captions of chimpanzees in clothes. These reactions were, I felt, unworthy; particularly as most of the photographs in the book are delightful and we must be grateful to Cherry Kearton for being, as the blurb tells us, the first man to illustrate natural history books with photographs of wild animals in their natural setting.

Anyway, I reasoned, the book is intended for children, not crusty, exigent adults! Accordingly, I gave it to three children to read—an eight-year-old English boy, a ten-year-old Swiss girl and a fourteen-year-old Austrian girl. They were unanimous in their approval, all agreeing that they enjoyed the book because it was about "real animals", was "true" and was "easy to understand" without being "babyish". The children's verdict must stand. The book would make an excellent present for a child of either sex, almost any age and, it would seem, more than one nationality!

M. D.