

The nomenclature of domestic chickens seems to be sadly confused as we learn that the so-called Cochin China fowls originated in Shanghai, and the Bramas in America.

The other species of wild Junglefowl have not figured extensively in domestication but Mr. Beebe's account of the hybridising of the Javan species is interesting and amusing. The wild cock when crossed with a domestic hen produces a bird with a remarkable penetrating and raucous voice which can be heard for a mile or more. These birds are highly prized by the natives and are matched against one another not as fighters, but as vocalists, and prove quite as satisfactory subjects upon which to wager money as do the game cocks. They are kept singly in wicker baskets hung high above the houses on tall bamboo poles where they crow continually, and keep in good voice.

Mr. Beebe's book is replete with interesting information while the pen pictures of the homes of the wild pheasants and his experiences in trailing them, are written in his familiar graphic style and we are taken successively to the higher slopes of the Himalayas, to the dense Malay jungles and to the islands of the tropical seas, wherever these beautiful birds exist. We heartily congratulate him and his publishers upon the successful progress that they are making with this notable work. It seems proper too, in this connection to recall the fact, that may not be known to all of our readers, that for the first volume of the 'Pheasants' Mr. Beebe was awarded the Daniel Giraud Elliot medal by the National Academy of Sciences.—W. S.

Mathews' and Iredale's 'A Manual of the Birds of Australia.'—With his monumental work 'The Birds of Australia' well on the way to completion, Mr. Mathews has begun, in conjunction with Mr. Tom Iredale, what we presume will be his last word on the subject—'A Manual of the Birds of Australia.' This work, in four volumes, small quarto, will consist of a condensed presentation of the matter contained in the larger work, with such alterations or emendations as the authors deem desirable. It will thus bear the same relation to 'The Birds of Australia' as Gould's 'Handbook' does to his large folio.

The plan of the work judged by Volume I is admirable. The higher groups are well diagnosed while under each genus and species is a synonymy of original references, with accurate dates, the working out of which has formed such an important part of Mr. Mathews' researches. Under the species there are also references to the plates and a brief statement of distribution.

¹ A Manual of the Birds of Australia by Gregory M. Mathews, F. R. S. E., M. R. A. O. U., and Tom Iredale, Members of the British Ornithologists Union and Corresponding Fellows of the American Ornithologists Union. Illustrated with Coloured and Monochrome Plates by Lilian Medland. Volume I. Orders Casuarii to Columbæ. H. F. & G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, London. 1921. pp. 1-279. pl. 1-X, and I-XXXVI. Crown 4, Price £ 3.35. per vol.

The main text is divided under the following headings: Description of plumage of adult, immature and chick; description of nest, and eggs; date of breeding season, time of incubation, and a discussion of distribution and forms. In the last category the subspecies are considered with extreme brevity, the typical race being mentioned by name with geographic range only, and the others contrasted with it, as "a darker race," "lighter and larger," etc. We have usually no means of ascertaining whether the description in the main text is based upon the typical subspecies or not. From the method of comparing the several races as described above, it would appear that it is, but when the "typical" form is not found in Australia it is hardly conceivable that the extra-limital bird is the one described. It is unfortunate that the authors are not more definite upon this point and the inclusion of the subspecific names in the synonymy on exactly the same basis as pure synonyms is another mistake. Subspecies must either be ignored entirely or adequately recognized; any half-way method only leads to confusion and misunderstanding. Another unfortunate point is the use of such a hackneyed word as "immature" in connection with plumage. With such definite discussions of plumage-stages as those of Dwight, Witherby and others, easily available, the authors might reasonably have been expected to tell us whether it is the "juvenal", "first winter" or some other "immature" plumage that they are describing.

These criticisms are however technical and as a rule do not affect the general usefulness of this important work, which, from its greater accessibility will probably be our standard reference book on Australian ornithology for some time to come.

The plates are numerous and admirable. Those in color represent mainly "chicks" (= natal plumage) of various species while the others illustrate structural characters of the various genera and are from wash drawings instead of outlines as is usually the case.

The only criticism to be made of the plates is in their numbering, there being two series, so that Plate 10, Vol. 1, may refer to either of two entirely different illustrations. Furthermore, there is no reference to any of the plates in the text to which they refer, and one may labor with the brief descriptions of the races of the Silver Gull without having any idea that at the end of the volume there is an excellent plate showing the differences in their wing markings.

Seven new subspecies are proposed in the text where they would readily be overlooked were it not for a list given in the preface.

One feature of this work, which will only appeal to experts on nomenclature is the admirable detail and accuracy of the synonymy, which will of necessity be consulted, especially as regards the genera, by ornithologists who have little or no interest in the avifauna of Australia.

We wish the authors all speed with the remaining volumes, although we realize that this work must of necessity follow along after the larger one, so that Volume V can hardly be expected until the latter is finished
—W. S.