

picture operator in a blind and secure a film of the performance, including the removal of a Pipit's egg by the Cuckoo, which seems normally to follow the deposit of its own egg.

The Cuckoo's exact method of depositing her egg seems not to have been even yet positively ascertained. Mr. Chance construes his evidence as proving that an egg can be laid in eight seconds, the period that the bird under observation was actually on a nest and left an egg which was not there before, and he also claims that in other instances it can be retained for hours after the bird has become anxious to lay it. Mr. Stuart Baker in a valuable paper on this subject, (Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, March 13, 1922,) regards both of these claims as improbable and says "there is no doubt that in the vast majority of cases the egg is laid by the Cuckoo elsewhere, and deposited by means of the bill in the foster-parent's nest," and further suggests that she holds her egg in her gullet and regurgitates it into the nest. He actually interprets Mr. Chance's film as endorsing this view.

Mr. Baker's admirable paper should also be read with care especially as it deals with African and Asiatic Cuckoos which must obviously be considered in solving the broader problems of the Cuckoo's parasitism.

Mr. Chance is certainly to be congratulated upon his admirable work and the great progress that he has made in the attempt to solve "the Cuckoo's Secret."—W. S.

**Beebe's 'A Monograph of the Pheasants' Volume III.**<sup>1</sup>—True to their promise the publishers have brought out the third volume of this splendid work promptly on the appointed date. The character and make-up of this volume are quite up to the standard of the preceding ones and so fully have these been described in our reviews of the other parts<sup>2</sup> that it seems unnecessary to repeat the details here.

With regard to the plates of the several species this volume is quite up to the standard of the last, although, as in that, we miss the exquisite work of Thorborn and its wonderful reproduction which characterized Volume 1. The eight plates by Lodge will probably be most appreciated among those of the volume now before us, although those by Jones, representing the races of *Phasianus colchicus*, are admirably adapted to the differentiation of these closely allied birds. The characters are far better shown in a series of "portraits," such as these, by a single artist, in which the birds are placed in approximately the same position and drawn

<sup>1</sup> A Monograph of the Pheasants. By William Beebe, (etc., etc.) Volume III. Published under auspices of the New York Zoological Society by H. F. and G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, London, England, 1921. Royal Quarto (12 × 16 in.) pp. i-xvi + 1-204, colored plates 24 (Nos. XLV-LXVIII), photogravures 21 (Nos. 40-60) and 4 maps. Edition limited to 600 copies; price of each volume \$62.50.

<sup>2</sup> For notice of Volume I see 'The Auk' January, 1919, of Volume II, July, 1921

to about the same scale, with only a trace of background, than in more artistic compositions where the subjects appear in varied poses and of different size. These pheasant portraits that Mr. Jones has produced are wonderful in their almost Japanese delicacy and detail and in some the suggestion of iridescence is most successfully produced.

The work of two new artists appear in this volume, L. A. Fuertes and E. Megargee. The plate of the Cheer Pheasant by the former is an admirable representation of the principle of protective coloration so characteristic of this dull colored species, but its very excellence in this respect makes it less beautiful than the plates of the more brilliant species which Lodge has depicted against dark backgrounds. Fuertes was again unfortunate in having to portray Elliot's Pheasant of rather bizarre coloration and the large size of the figure has not added to the effect. Megargee's single plate of Soemmerring's Copper Pheasant, is not very impressive, while Knight's plate of Reeve's Pheasant demonstrates again, to our mind, the impossibility of using oil paintings for such reproductions as these. All of this discussion serves only to demonstrate what must be apparent to all who have been asked to judge of the respective merits of various pictures of mammals, birds, etc. It is almost impossible to say "this one is the best" because one may be the most artistic, another the most important from a scientific point of view, another most perfect in pose and coloration, while in all, the method of reproduction and the size of the figures are bound to influence our opinion.

The photogravure reproductions of Mr. Beebe's photographs of the haunts of the various species are particularly beautiful and continue to add much to the attractiveness of the work. The groups covered by Volume III comprise the Koklass Pheasants (*Pucrasia*); the Cheer (*Catreus*); the True Pheasants (*Phasianus*) and the Long-tailed Pheasants (*Syrmaticus*). The last group is remarkable for the great difference in the plumage of the several species, including the copper-colored Soemmerring, the yellow and black Reeve's and the blue and black Mikado. The last, the most recently discovered pheasant species, has an interesting history. It is a native of Mt. Arizan, Central Formosa, and was described by Ogilvie Grant in 1906 from two central tail feathers obtained from a native head dress. They were so distinctive as to indicate a new species beyond any question of doubt, though a specimen of this beautiful bird was not obtained until several years later.

The genus *Phasianus* is one of the great puzzles of the pheasant family on account of the large number of hybrid forms developed in captivity and the confusing array of geographic races. Following his criterion on genera—that they are geographic and non-overlapping, Mr. Beebe has separated *Syrmaticus* and *Calophasis*, sometimes included in *Phasianus*, and he has recognized only two species among the forms remaining. *P. versicolor* of Japan, and *P. colchicus*, extending, in one or another of

its forms, all across Asia from the Sea of Azof and the Black Sea to the Japan Sea, and from the Tropic of Cancer to 48° N. Latitude, in Manchuria.

Beebe's statement that in a single ricefield in China representatives of three recognized forms of *P. colchicus* were obtained and two undescribed ones illustrates the variability of the characters that might and often have been regarded as of systematic value. No less than 35 forms of this species have been named of which Beebe recognizes 23, admitting at the same time our very imperfect knowledge of the birds in much of their wide range, and the lack of suitable series of specimens for study and comparison. We shall look with interest for the fourth and concluding volume of this notable work which the publishers promise before the close of the year and congratulate both them and the author upon the painstaking care and energy which have produced such splendid results.—W. S.

**Van Oort's 'Birds of the Netherlands'**.<sup>1</sup>—This triple installment consists entirely of plates, covering many of the Hawks, Eagles, Quail, Shore-birds, Rails and Cranes, the thirty plates bearing numbers between 89 and 183. They are of the same high quality as those in preceding parts and, although the large size of some of the figures and the crowding on certain of the plates detract from their artistic beauty, they are admirable for purposes of identification while the representation of the various plumages adds materially to their value. The publisher is making excellent progress with the plates and promises the letter press in succeeding parts.—W. S.

**Swann's revised 'Synopsis of the Accipitres'**.<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Swann after a further study of his subject decided to issue an entirely new edition. This follows exactly the style of the original edition but contains many additions and changes in nomenclature, and some alteration in the systematic arrangement. The author has received assistance and criticism from many sources and has had access to a manuscript list of Accipitres prepared recently by Mr. W. L. Sclater, all of which have helped to make the list as complete "as human exertion" can make it, though the author admits that further corrections, etc., are inevitable. The number of species now

<sup>1</sup> Ornithologia Neerlandica. De Vogels van Nederland door Dr. E. D. Van Oort. Gravenhage Martinus Nyhoff. Afl. 10-12.

<sup>1</sup> A Synopsis of the Accipitres (Diurnal Birds of Prey). By H. Kirke Swann, F. Z. S., M. B. O. U. Corresponding Fellow, Amer. Orn. Union. Second Edition, Revised and Corrected throughout. London. Wheldon and Wesley, Ltd., 38, Great Queen Street, Kingsway, W. C. 2, and 28, Essex Street, Stand, W. C. 2, Price 6s. per part. Part I (Sept. 28, 1921) pp. 1-63; Part II. (Jan. 3, 1922). pp. 65-122; Part III, (Feb. 16, 1922) pp. 123-178 plus addendum to pp. 3-4 and Errata et Addenda i-iii; Part IV, (May 20, 1922) pp. 179-233 plus title, preface and index, i-viii and 1 page Errata et Addenda.)