

it was simply another of these accounts. However the preface, a part of a book which too few persons read, at once attracted our attention. Here the author states that bird books are of two sorts, "those intended to be informative and those which are calculated largely for pleasure" and that "the trouble with most of them is that the authoritative books are painfully uninteresting, and the entertaining ones so empty and superficial as to be quite valueless after a first reading." He adds that his book is very ambitious as it endeavors to serve both ends.

He later speaks of the various sides of ornithology. There is the lover of the outdoors to whom birds "are necessary to complete his rustic ensemble;" there is the man engaged in a systematic study of bird plumage; the artist who takes a keen delight in their form and color; and another who studies birds from a strictly scientific viewpoint. Therefore he defines ornithology as "a collection of smaller studies centered around an ill-defined core rather than a separate study in itself, and the only real core is the highly vague love for and pleasure in birds, which begins as an offshoot of aestheticism and ends as a branch of science." While "the scientific ornithologist may possess half the truth, the plain bird watcher certainly possesses the other half; but neither is entirely convincing."

Mr. Richmond admits that the scheme of his book requires that some of his chapters shall be highly contentious, and adds that "the study of birds will be a poor thing when people cease to argue about them."

The seriousness of the problems which he discusses may be realized from the titles of his chapters: The English Tradition in Ornithology; On Seeing New Birds; The Balance (?) of Birds; A Northumbrian Bird Sanctuary; Spring Song; The Territory Theory and its Fallacies; Nesting Birds; Merely a Sewage Farm; Instinct, Intelligence and Character among Birds; The Common; Past and Present; Problems of the Species; Seen on an Essex Estuary; and Frost.

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to follow Mr. Richmond's interesting comments on the varied subjects of which he treats but we cannot but quote his attitude toward gunning, a practice which seems today to be worse in England than in America, although most of what he says is equally applicable to our own country. "It is the gun," he claims, "as much as anything else, which has wrecked our natural bird-sanctuaries, and only where the gun is forbidden is there anything like a return to the older and more natural state. For the last four hundred years the gun has taken an ever increasing toll of our bird life. Wherever one goes throughout the land one hears the sound of a gun. Escape it you cannot, and of all these multitudinous shooters, experience shows that for every sportsman out after rabbits or partridge, there is a fool who is ready to shoot any bird that comes near him." This "fool" is the source of all the trouble and his elimination is a serious problem for both sportsman and bird lover.

In discussing song and territorialism he says, "It is essential to realize that the origin for song, the reason for its growth, the functions of song, and the particular reasons for song, are all distinct problems in themselves," and when one writer states that "song is not essentially an expression of emotion we must not read into it a contradiction of the belief that song originated in *joie de vivre*."

Our author is evidently well read on his subject and has had an abundant field experience which, combined with an ability to present his ideas and facts in an interesting way, has enabled him to realize in a marked degree his object as set forth in his preface. It is a book that all ornithologists in his broad conception of the word should read.—W. S.

**Chisholm's 'Bird Wonders of Australia.'**—Most of our readers are doubtless

acquainted with Mr. Chisholm's popular writings on Australian birds and will welcome another work from his pen. The present volume,<sup>1</sup> he tells us, was prepared at the request of his publishers, with the idea of presenting accurate accounts of the peculiar habits and actions of certain Australian birds which had often been grossly exaggerated or misconstrued by careless writers of the past. They could not have selected a better author for such a work than Mr. Chisholm who is not only an ornithologist of repute but an experienced writer on popular natural history, and his book fully meets the idea of his publishers. From the grotesque portrait of the Frog-mouth, which forms the frontispiece, to the photographs of the mud, retort-like, nests of the Fairy Martins, the numerous illustrations present the unusual in bird life while the author's chapters on Lyre-bird Revels; Birds that Bury their Eggs; Queer Relations of Birds and Insects; Feathered Players and Dancers, etc., etc., tell us, from personal observation, of the peculiar actions of the birds of a peculiar land.

Of especial interest is the account of young blind Cuckoos throwing the young of their foster parents from the nest which was done repeatedly under the eyes not only of the author but of a number of bird students and the Governor of the province of New South Wales. The latter dignitary at first suggested the advisability of throwing out the Cuckoo's egg but after careful consideration said "perhaps it will be as well to let nature take its course." In one case described by Mr. Chisholm the young Cuckoo was in a closed nest but managed to back up to the entrance with a young Warbler on his hollowed back and eject it from the opening. This was done several times after the Warbler had been replaced in the nest, both young birds having not yet opened their eyes! The same reaction has been gained by placing sticks or any object on the back of the young Cuckoo which is very sensitive and the bird immediately tries to throw off anything which touches it.

The appropriateness of the title for one chapter 'The Land of Parrots' is appreciated when we learn that there are no less than fifty-nine species found in Australia and, in spite of the sad destruction of numbers of these beautiful birds, since the time of John Gould, it is refreshing to know that "considerable numbers" still remain and that Australia is still a "land of Parrots." A chapter on "Why Birds Dress Up" is a discussion of Hingston's 'The Meaning of Animal Colour and Adornment' and the author's experience in applying Hingston's theories<sup>2</sup> to Australian birds. ¶

But it is impossible to even list the many interesting matters discussed by Mr. Chisholm and we can only recommend his book to those interested in foreign birds and in the broader problems of ornithology.—W. S.

**Sutton's 'Eskimo Year.'**—Some months ago (*Auk*, 1933, p. 498) it was our privilege to review Dr. George Miksch Sutton's account of his ornithological observations and collections made on Southampton Island during a residence of a year in that remote spot. Now we have his personal account<sup>3</sup> of his experiences during that sojourn with the Eskimos.

He tells us in a brief foreword that his book "is not a dissertation on Arctic beasts and birds but a study of relationships and of human adjustment, but first of all it is the story of a glorious adventure in a glorious country." This admirably describes

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<sup>1</sup> Bird Wonders of | Australia | By | Alec H. Chisholm | F. R. Z. S., C. F. A. O. U. | With Fifty-eight Illustrations | Australia | Angus & Robertson Limited | 89 Castlereagh Street, Sydney | 1934. Pp. i-xiii + 1-299. Price 6 shillings.

<sup>2</sup> See F. H. Allen, *Auk*, October, 1934, p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> Eskimo Year | A Naturalist's Adventures in the Far North | By | George Miksch Sutton | Illustrated | with Drawings and Photographs by the | Author and with Photographs by several | Men of the North Country | New York | The Macmillan Company | 1934. Pp. i-xi + 1-321. Price \$3.00.