

the protective or luring value of the tail coloration. Mr. Mousley has done a good service in bringing together for handy reference all of this matter. His discovery of very early knowledge of the bill movement was previously presented in 'The Auk' for July, 1934.—W. S.

**Whistler's 'Popular Handbook of Indian Birds.'**—The first edition of this notable work<sup>1</sup> appeared in 1928 (see *Auk* 1928, p. 389) and has proven so desirable that a new edition has been demanded. In the first edition a selection of 250 of the more common Indian birds was presented for detailed treatment, covering those most frequently encountered. In the present edition these have been increased to 275, while brief mention is made of some 230 others, so that the book now presents information on approximately 500 species which include the birds of all parts of India with the exception of some of the rarest forms.

Not only has the text been amplified in this and other ways but three additional plates have been prepared, one of them in colors, making twenty in all.

Such a handbook is invaluable to the resident or visiting ornithologist, while to residents of other countries unable to visit India it will furnish interesting information on species entirely unknown in their own faunas. Of the Green Bee-eater, a bird somewhat allied to the Kingfisher, we read: "It is one of the commonest birds of India, and attracts attention from its beautiful coloration and from its favorite perch being on the telegraph-wires. \* \* \* It spends its life hawking for insects from a perch to which it returns after every flight and only visits the ground for nesting purposes. The eggs are laid in a chamber reached by a tunnel usually excavated in the face of a perpendicular bank." There are also interesting accounts of the numerous Cuckoos one of which, the large black Koel, is parasitic on the Crow. The book is one that should be in every well selected ornithological library.—W. S.

**Yeates on 'The Life of the Rook.'**—This excellent book<sup>2</sup> is at once a careful study of bird behavior and a dissertation on tree-top photography, upon which art the author is an authority. This big bare-faced Crow is of especial interest to American bird students since it possesses characteristics, both of appearance and habits, quite different from our familiar Crow of the United States while its gregariousness at nesting time recalls our smaller coastal Fish Crow. Its very name, too, is familiar in the word "rookery" originally referring to its own nesting communities but now generally used in this country in connection with Herons, Pelicans and other colony-nesting species. The bird too, is familiar to us by its frequent mention in the stories of so many British writers of fiction as of almost universal occurrence about the old English country seats.

Our author's first interest in Rooks was in his boyhood egg collecting days when their tree-top nesting habits challenged his ability to reach their homes. Then with his success in scaling the trees and his interest in photography they became his favorite study. The whole life of the bird is covered in the chapters: Nesting, Courtship, Period of Incubation, After Hatching, Summer and Autumn, Winter. The author brings out some very interesting features such as "mobbing" mating birds by other members of the rookery, which he thinks is only done in the case of promiscuous

<sup>1</sup> Popular Handbook of | Indian Birds | By Hugh Whistler, F.Z.S. | Late Indian (Imperial) Police | Illustrated with twenty full-page plates (ninety-five figures) | of which five are coloured, and ninety-six figures | in the text, from drawings by H. Grönvold | Second Edition | Gurney and Jackson | London: 33 Paternoster Row, E. C. | Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court | 1935. Pp. i-xxvii + 1-513. Price 15 shillings net.

<sup>2</sup> The Life of the Rook | By | G. K. Yeates | Part Author of *Bird Haunts in Wild Britain* | With 22 illustrations | from Photographs by the Author | Philip Allen | London | 69 Great Russell St., W. C. 1. 1934. Pp. 1-95. Price, 10 shillings, 6 pence, net.

mating of a regularly mated bird; and the anti-Jackdaw flights when the whole rookery with the exception of incubating birds regularly takes after a passing flock of vociferous Daws—which are by the way, another and smaller member of the Crow family.

All in all 'The life of the Rook' is a most attractive and well written study of bird life while the chapter on Tree-top Photography will prove of especial interest and benefit to our bird photographers. Mr. Yeates says that he has never photographed a more interesting species, largely because there is "always something in the wind. There is activity enough in a big ternery or gullery, but it seems in some way a very stereotyped form of activity, and lacking the character and individuality of the Rook's ways." He also comments upon one of the obstacles to the proper interpretation of bird behavior, i. e. the prevalence of popular ideas and the difficulty to realize to what an extent we are influenced by "preconceived notions which arise from mere supposition and vulgar rumor."

Sixteen admirable plates, from photographs by the author, give one an excellent idea of the nest activities of the species while a text cut shows how a tree blind may be made. The book is handsomely printed on extra heavy paper and is a credit to all concerned.—W. S.

**Thomson's 'Birds from the Hide.'**—This book' of Mr. Ian M. Thomson will prove a delight to all who, like him, make bird photography a hobby and a diversion from a professional life. With but a page of preface, he plunges directly into the stories and experiences connected with his photography of British birds, some of them "extreme rarities" and others those "charming commoners, which all of us know."

While our author states that he has put down merely what he has seen and that his experiences may seem absurd to a "first rank" ornithologist we think that he has recorded not a little information with real value in the study of bird behavior during the hours spent in the cramped "hide" or tent, not to mention the beautiful pictures that his skill with the camera has produced. Sixty-three of these are published in full page sepia plates arranged with explanations at the end of the book. All are studies at the nest and not infrequently contain both parents as well as the young. Eighteen species are considered, the Bittern, Water Rail, Harrier, Bearded Tit, Short-eared Owl, Crested Grebe, Skylark, Lapwing, Tufted Duck, Curlew, Red-throated Diver, Hooded Crow, Twite, Northern Phalarope, Skua, Jaeger, Long-tailed Titmouse, and Bullfinch. From pictures and text the reader is able to form a close acquaintance with these birds of "Old England" and to compare them with their representatives in America.—W. S.

**Mathews on the Procellariiformes.**<sup>2</sup>—Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, as is well known, is engaged in monographing the Procellariiformes and has recently published two papers of a preliminary character in the hope that they may arouse interest in the subject and induce those in possession of additional information on any of the Petrels and Albatrosses to forward it to him, as well as their views upon his conclusions as to the relationship and "systematics" of this puzzling group.

His first paper covers the genus *Fregatta* and its allies in which he shows pretty

<sup>1</sup> Birds from the Hide | Described and Photographed | By | Ian M. Thomson | With sixty-three Plates | in Photogravure. A. & C. Black Ltd. 4, 5, & 6 Soho Square, London, W 1. 1933. Pp. i-xi + 1-108. Price 7 shillings, 6 pence.

<sup>2</sup> On *Fregatta* Bonaparte and Allied Genera. By Gregory M. Mathews. *Novitates Zoöl.* XXXIX, pp. 34-54, October, 1933.

A Check List of the Order Procellariiformes. By Gregory M. Mathews. *Novitates Zoöl.* XXXIX, pp. 151-206, December, 1934.