

be rather regrettable if active ornithologists should be switched over to follow, as the only available alternative, the admittedly-useful but restricted kind of bird observing which largely passes as "bird-life studies" in Australia at the present day. No dispassionate critic will deny that compared with the work being turned out in England, the Continent and America in the field study of bird-life, Australian activities may be placed in the preliminary stage of the evolution of bird study, the Gilbert White stage, to borrow a comparison used by a recent writer in another connection. And a not inconsiderable proportion of the literature produced is of a correspondingly old-fashioned type, concerning which, or rather its present-day English equivalents, Nicholson has been unsparingly critical in his book previously mentioned, *The Art of Bird Watching*.

Were it desirable to require some qualification for membership of the R.A.O.U., this reviewer would include the reading of this book of Nicholson's and a study, if possible, of a file of *British Birds*. The methods, problems, etc., are different from what will concern a local worker, and some work, such as that on the Grey Heron population, manifestly impossible of being carried out locally on the same scale, but the book will nevertheless provide valuable information as well as inspiration generally, and its Australian analogue cannot be hoped for for many years. Modern bird-watching is much more exacting in its demands on its devotee than the old, and though one does not need to be an academically-trained scientist by any means, training and education in the study are essential. Nicholson complains that too many persons who essay bird-watching do not read enough. Despite the newness of the subject and its imperfections he insists that "bird-watching has accumulated a rich fund of experience which is definitely worth drawing on."*

* Previous reviews of Nicholson's work have appeared in *The Emu* as follow: vol. xxvii, 1927, pp. 55 and 56; vol. xxxi, 1932, p. 318.

Magpie killing Sparrow.—Several references in *The Emu*, and elsewhere, to Magpies killing small birds, chiefly Pipits, prompt me to record another instance. In September, 1936, whilst near Drysdale, in the Geelong district, Victoria, en route to Lake Connemare, we saw two White-backed Magpies on the roadside—one with a dead bird in its bill. Stopping the car we ran back a few yards, whereupon the Magpies flew away without their victim. It proved to be a House-Sparrow, still warm and limp and evidently just killed.—ROD. MORELL, Melbourne, Vic., 4/3/37.