

Reviews

[*Scratch Cuckoo*, a booklet of verses for children. By L. A. Redgrave. Price, 2·6.]

The author, whose volume of bird-verses for children, entitled "Feathered Favourites", was recently reviewed in *The Emu*, has produced another booklet, which is a series of rhymes devoted to the more familiar Cockatoos and Parrots. Mr. Redgrave is confined to his room, yet with no opportunity of observing the birds in the field he nevertheless appears to seize on typical attributes of the birds he describes. Moreover he is including hand-coloured sketches, and whilst he says there is a tremendous amount of work involved in the colouring, yet he hopes that the "coloured line drawings will encourage children to copy them"—a laudable hope.

The author is doing admirable work, because his simple sketches and easy rhymes should prove fascinating to children—our future ornithologists. And there is distinct merit in some of the verses—those devoted to the Superb Parrot and the Budgerygah in particular. The sentiment is right—protective without being mawkish. Mr. Redgrave appears keen on his work, and it is to be hoped that its success will be such as to spur him on to further efforts.—C.E.B.

[*The Nidification of Birds of the Indian Empire*. By E. C. Stuart Baker, C.I.E., O.B.E., F.Z.S. Vol. II, pp. 1-564 (including 28 pages of index), 6 plates. Taylor & Francis, Fleet Street, London.]

The second volume of this very instructive and interesting work was published on 31st May last, and covers twelve families, viz.:—*Turdidae*, *Muscicapidae*, *Laniidae*, *Campophagidae*, *Artamidae*, *Dicruridae*, *Sylviidae*, *Regalidae*, *Trogonidae*, *Oriolidae*, *Graculidae* and *Sturnidae*. It deals with species and sub-species numbered 481 to 1007 (both inclusive), each of which is treated in a manner similar to that adopted in the earlier volume. The following genera which appear on the Australian list are referred to in the present volume:—*Oreocincla*, *Lalage*, *Artamus*, *Chibia*, *Acrocephalus*, *Cisticola* and *Oriolus*. It will thus be seen that the special interest for ornithologists in Australia is well sustained. Descriptions of nests and eggs in these genera indicate that they are similar to the nests and eggs of our birds in the same genera. In the genus *Cisticola* details are given of two sub-species of *C. exilis*.

A comparison of vernacular names used in this work with those adopted for the second edition of our *Checklist* gives several items of interest. Thus in the genus *Oreocincla*

the name Mountain Thrush is used, and some of these Thrushes are found at elevations up to 11,000 feet; for our list the word "Ground" was substituted for "Mountain" because our species may be found not only in the hills, but also in the coastal scrubs a few feet above the level of the sea. In India all birds in the genera *Lalage* and *Gracula* are known as Cuckoo-Shrikes, whilst we have applied the name Triller to those in the genus *Lalage*. Indian birds in the genus *Artamus* are called Swallow-Shrikes, and on our list they appear as Wood-Swallows. For information with regard to two species which have been introduced to Australia one may turn to this volume. These are *Sturnus vulgaris*, the common Starling, and *Acridotheres tristis*, the common Myna, both of which have multiplied rapidly in this country.

The wealth of bird life in the Indian Empire, as well as the completeness of the index to the volume under review, is indicated when one finds under the heading "Flycatcher" eighty species and sub-species.—J.A.R.

[*The Birds of Nippon*. By Prince Taka-Tsukasa, Vol. 1, part 2, pp. 71-128. I. V-XXVI. H. F. and G. Witherby, London; Yokendo, Tokyo.]

The second part of this work contains what one would have expected to find in the first part—an extensive description of the physiography of the Japanese Empire (including the mandated territories), a matter of some importance, considering that in all ornithological work ecology is receiving ever-increasing attention. Four forms of birds only are dealt with, and these represent but two species—*Symnaticus samneringii* (Temminck) and *Phasianus versicolor* Vieillot, so that when it is considered that over fifty pages are devoted to four forms, it will be seen that the details of each are extensive. The well-known Green Pheasant, regarded as the best of game-birds, has been introduced nearly all over the world, and is well established in Europe, North America, St. Helena, New Zealand, and Hawaii. Considerable variation exists in this bird, chiefly in the tail—the colour varying even in the same brood. In addition, albinos, partial albinos, grey variants, melanistic forms and buffy variants are recorded, and, in fact, not uncommon. This bird and other Pheasants are snared and otherwise captured by the Japanese in considerable numbers—"sheds," decoys, snares, dogs and call-whistles all being used for such purpose. Under *Symnaticus samneringii samneringii* it is recorded that "The Copper Pheasants in Kyushu seem as if they were hurrying to extermination through the agency of the snares." From reports made by but twenty-seven "Prefectural offices" it appears that "300,196 Pheas-

ants were captured during the shooting season of 1924." The hitherto-existing diminution in numbers is, however, being "alleviated greatly by rigid game-laws and the establishment of game preserves."

It is recorded that the Green Pheasant attacks and kills snakes, and whilst doubtless this is correct, some of the stories concerning this aspect are possibly legendary, or part of folk-lore, like the statement that Oita district natives say that charred tail-feathers of the Copper Pheasant is an effective remedy for curing running ears. Incidentally, Japanese legends are included in the general notes—in fact, there is practically no head of information neglected, for in addition to those matters already mentioned, and the more orthodox ones of nomenclature (including synonymy), descriptions of sexes, distribution, nidification, habits and general notes, the work contains also accounts of birds in captivity, excerpts from other accounts, and much of general information. Several pages are devoted to proofs of Pheasants' susceptibility to impending earthquakes.

Three coloured plates and a number of photogravure plates are included—some of the latter are not quite as defined as they might be.

—C.E.B.
