
Reviews

[*Our Sandhill Country.* By A. M. Duncan-Kemp. Price, 6/-. Angus & Robertson Ltd.]

In Mrs. Duncan-Kemp's book we have a series of vivid descriptions of Nature and Man in south-western Queensland. On this fringe of the Never-Never there is much to interest the naturalist, particularly the ornithologist, and the authoress shows that she is a keen observer in this direction by the entertaining bird notes included. A chapter devoted to birds on the flood-waters tells of the amazing numbers of birds that frequent watercourses in the interior; interspersed in other parts of the book are continual references to birds seen throughout the vast areas that constitute station properties in the outback. A particularly interesting reference is that to a "little brown bird with a check collar of black and white" and "chestnut breast feathers"—obviously the Plain Wanderer, and, in the locality referred to, considerably inland from other records. Crested Wedgebills are amongst the interesting interior birds referred to—their ventriloquial notes being commented upon. Somehow or other the bill of this bird has been exaggerated in the account to a "weird, curved, wedge-shaped bill, as long as its owner." On the whole, the book is entertaining reading.—C. E. B.

[*Budgerigars in Bush and Aviary.* By Neville W. Cayley. xii + 147. Angus & Robertson Ltd., Sydney. Price, 7/6.]

With the publication of this volume, Mr. Cayley has added to the laurels gained from its two predecessors'

popularity and demand. The author, although not having, of recent years, experimented with Budgerigar breeding himself, has been closely associated with leading breeders in Sydney and elsewhere, and is certainly most competent to deal with the subject of his new book—as the volume itself clearly shows. Its publishers refer to it as the most comprehensive book ever published on Budgerigars, a statement that appears justified when the volume is perused, for whilst there is much that is new, the author also collates all previous records of Budgerigar breeding.

There has been a tremendous stimulus of recent years in breeding colour varieties of Budgerigars—under a heading of “Colour Varieties and their Production” we are told of 164 general matings and no less than 323 “greywing” matings carried out by Dr. Hans Duncker and Herr General Cremer in investigating the possibility of new forms. Eighteen coloured varieties are recognized in the Year Book of the Budgerigar Society of England for 1933, running from light greens through yellows and sky blue to cobalts and mauves, whilst many variations of these exist, and breeders are continually endeavouring to evolve new varieties.

The book under review deals with all the foregoing, describing their distinctive features. It includes also an historical account of the bird with excerpts and plates from early descriptions; extensive notes, including observations of many noted Australian field-ornithologists, concerning the bird in the bush, where flocks of countless thousands are often encountered; accounts of birds in aviaries; chapters on housing, feeding, breeding, and management; suggestions for improving strains; and special sections dealing with French moult and other sundry diseases. When to all this is added photographs and drawings of aviaries and plans of breeding boxes it will be realized that nothing of interest to novices in Budgerigar breeding—nor indeed to those already well versed in Budgerigar “lore”—is omitted, and that the book will be a handbook *par excellence* for potential aviculturists.

Six beautiful colour plates by the author, illustrating many of the varieties referred to, are included.

Budgerigars in Bush and Aviary should meet a want that has been steadily growing with the recent growth of Budgerigar societies all over the world.—C. E. B.

The Editor acknowledges several contributions that have been held over until the April *Emu*.