

Out of Doors

Edited by Winwood Reade. Pp. 160. (London: Rathbone Books, Ltd., 1959.) 12s. 6d. net.

"OUT OF DOORS" is a book written specially for children with the purpose of catching their interest and encouraging their observations of wild life. It cannot fail to do either. By dividing the book into twelve chapters, one for each month of the year, it provides a perpetual stimulus.

Under each month there are four sections. The first deals with things that can be seen out of doors. A large number of general facts are given here, as well as the specific observations for the particular month. The easy style and abundant illustrations of this first section set the tone for the rest. Secondly, there is an excellent article on one particular topic, written by a well-known naturalist. The third section of each month describes, very simply, something practical that can be made, done or collected. The last section is always two picture puzzles. These may be difficult for children; but even if they do not actually know the answers they will enjoy guessing, and learn something by looking up the correct answers in the back of the book.

The book combines all the qualities that enable a child to learn enjoyably. Not only is it highly informative, and infectious in its enthusiasm for the subject; it also appeals to a child's love of practical work, and encourages him to use his eyes. These qualities make "Out of Doors" suitable for even the young child. At the same time, many adults will be more than pleased to widen their knowledge of birds, trees, flowers, insects, animals, etc., in such a straightforward manner.

There are no coloured plates, which one misses, perhaps, in a book of this kind, and which always catch the eye, but this is more than made up for by the numerous excellent black-and-white illustrations.

B. J. G. MAITLAND

The Waterfowl of the World

By Jean Delacour. Vol. 3: Eiders, Pochards, Perching Ducks, Scoters, Golden-eyes and Mergansers, Stiff-tailed Ducks. Pp. 270+20 plates. (London: Country Life, Ltd., 1959.) 126s. net.

WITH this third volume Mr. Delacour completes his account of the ducks, geese and swans of the world; we thus now have a comprehensive modern work on the Anatidae by a recognized authority, with Mr. Peter Scott's colour figures of the birds in their various plumage phases and useful distribution maps. The information given for each species or sub-species covers description, distribution, general habits and record in captivity—this last of special interest to the aviculturist.

Vol. 3 begins with the eiders, including the familiar British species. It proceeds to the pochards, narrow-billed and broad-billed respectively. Next come the perching ducks (or tree ducks), including the Carolina wood-duck so familiar in captivity and the beautiful mandarin duck which has lately become feral in England; the rest are tropical, including the so-called pygmy geese, the unique comb duck, the spur-winged goose, and the muscovy duck—the last a South American species which has been domesticated and is often crossed with the domestic mallard. Then we come to a group which includes such largely marine diving ducks as the scoters and golden-eyes and also the saw-billed ducks or mergansers. Finally

there are the stiff-tailed ducks, including the strange musk duck of Australia and the aberrant black-headed duck of South America, which has the cuckoo-like habit of foisting its parental duties on other species.

Looking at this fine work as a whole—all three volumes—one is impressed by the great range of interest to be found within a group so relatively uniform that most of its members are included in a single sub-family. It is gratifying to have the information so competently and handsomely brought together.

LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON

Uganda in Black and White

By Hugh B. Cott. Pp. xxvi+232 (109 figures). (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1959.) 30s. net

AN unusual and delightful volume which seeks to fascinate the reader with the beauties of Uganda and its inhabitants by means of no less than 109 full-page drawings with brief explanations on the opposite pages. There is a short foreword by Sir Andrew Cohen, a former governor of the Territory, and a not much longer introduction by the author, and then we come to the pictures. Dr. Cott is interested in crocodiles, and the main reason for his sojourn in Uganda was to study the habitat of these unpleasant beasts. But he is also an artist with a keen eye for the country and the people. Much more can be done with drawings than is possible with photographs. The latter are doubtless factually correct, but there is something that drawings can give which the unselective photograph cannot. Dr. Cott is interested in the old Uganda, not in its Westernized modern developments. He does not pretend to have visited every single part of it, but he does give us pictures from many regions. There are pampas swamps and country scenes, dhows on Lake Victoria, a Muganda lady, and, of course, some crocodiles. A lovely picture of the Ripon Falls before they vanished when the new dam was built can be taken in conjunction with another two of the Murchison Falls. Then there are giraffe browsing and a serval cat, not to mention elephants, rhinoceros, and an Ankole cow. Some of the characteristic carvings in hard wood of various animals, etc., are also illustrated, as well as the people themselves. Altogether a delightful volume which it is a pleasure to possess.

M. C. BURKITT

A Geography of Ghana

By E. A. Boateng. Pp. xvi+205+24 plates. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1959.) 21s. net.

ALTHOUGH primarily intended for school examination candidates and first-year university students, this book deserves a wider public. Written by a Ghanaian, who is now senior lecturer in the University College of his own country, for his own people, it reaches a high level in selection and presentation of material. An enclave surrounded by French-speaking territory, there has been some tendency for Ghana to be surveyed and studied in isolation, and it is useful to have summaries of local work in geology (with explanation of the special terminology), vegetation, soil and agriculture. A third of the book is devoted to a systematic treatment of the contrasted geographical regions. An excellent series of 41 photographs and 46 text figures and maps, all carefully prepared, completes a book of which Ghana may well be proud.

L. DUDLEY STAMP