

problem of population control measures. The advocates of population control say it can only be done by improving the standard of living; to effect these improved standards it is therefore first necessary to arrest the decline in soil fertility by the introduction of improved agriculture and better husbandry. Whilst emphasizing the heavy expenditure this latter work will introduce, Doctor Westermann gives rural education a very high place in the reconstruction programme.

The warning contained in this review is well summed up in the author's own version of Oliver Goldsmith's well known lines of poetry:

"Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey

"Where people still accumulate, and soil and men decay."

E. W. M.

*Note.*—This book is Publication No. 7 of the Foundation for Scientific Research in Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, c/o Zoological Laboratory of the State University, 8 Janskerkhof, Utrecht, Holland. Price 4 florins. Payment can be arranged through purchasers' banks.

## SOUTH AFRICAN BIRDS OF PREY

BIRDS OF THE GAUNTLET. By H. VON MICHAËLIS. Hutchinson.  
£4 4s.

I suppose that *Birds of the Gauntlet* is a justifiable title, for much of this book is about birds which can be used in falconry; but it is not a book about falconry and this should, I think, be made known. Falconers are few and Mr. von Michaëlis' book will appeal to a far larger public.

The first part is really a series of studies of bird personalities, including owls, eagles and kites, but there is a chapter about a swan and an excellent one concerned with Archibald the Terrible, an Egyptian gander. Each bird is considered as an individual, not as a representative of a species. Many were taken as nestlings and there is some information which will be useful to those trying to rear young falcons—but let him who attempts this beware, for even such an expert as von Michaëlis admits to many a failure. Once he touches upon the ethics of plundering a nest but confesses that his feeling of guilt is soon quelled by the joy of possession.

Besides being a naturalist the author is a glider pilot and this has enabled him to give us fine descriptions of soaring flight and of the thermal air currents which make it possible. Often have I admired a towering cumulus without realizing that it was "a mountain sprung into life, its sides boiling over into whirling

masses with vast buttresses" a source of enormous thermal lifting force, but a force which man uses at his peril.

In this review I have purposely considered *Birds of the Gaunilet* firstly for its reading matter, because von Michaëlis has already in South Africa attained such fame as an artist, that his writing might well have been but the means by which he connected and presented his pictures. I have tried to show that this is not so.

Among works of the many other gifted bird artists of the present time, von Michaëlis' paintings would take a high, though not perhaps an outstanding position. But no praise can be too high for the drawings with which nearly every page is decorated and to which many whole pages are devoted.

The book is written in a clear style which sometimes becomes poetical—I like particularly the description of a falcon's flight. It is expensive but beautifully produced.

C. L. B.

ANIMALS AND MAN. By G. S. CANSDALE. Hutchinson. 15s.  
THE CHANGING WILD LIFE OF BRITAIN. By H. L. EDLIN.  
B. T. Batsford, Ltd. 21s.

These books have something in common for both concern animals in their relationship with man. Moreover, both authors are such experts in their own subjects and are able to present those subjects so interestingly, that the reader quickly becomes aware when less familiar ground is trodden.

Mr. Cansdale has been a forester and has spent many years among the trees, the animals and the people of West Africa. Until recently he was Superintendent of the London Zoo and it is to his experiences as forester and zoo-man that we owe the best chapters of his book. How absorbing it is to read of the introduction into the pheasant house of a laughing jackass to control the rats and mice, of the accidental biological control, by an escaped snake, of rodents in the reptile house and of the deliberate use of geckos for the same purpose against cockroaches. Then we have the defence of American citrus plantations by a ladybird and the introduction of a British ichneumon fly into New Zealand, to prey upon the large wood-wasp, *Sirex*, which damages the Oregon pines.

Many associations between animals and man are considered—their competition for living space, their relationship as master and servant, and the effect on man of the ill-considered introduction of exotic species. In an entertaining chapter on wild