

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 Gauntlet* 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

animals in captivity we are taken to ancient Egypt, led through the amphitheatres of the Roman emperors, past the bear pit at Berne and eventually back to the London Zoo.

Mr. Cansdale has written a popular book and the style is popular, sometimes even slangy which I personally do not much like. The wording shows a lack of critical re-reading; Steller's sea cow is "quite unique" and the Thames receives a great volume of "assorted" pollution. And why does Mr. Cansdale venture into the world of etymology? "Struth" is surely simply explained as a contraction of "God's truth". Can it be by any reasonable stretch of imagination be traced to the Greeks, on seeing an ostrich exclaiming "Great sparrow—struthio".

But let me not stress unduly matters of words and style. "Animals and Man" is a very readable and enjoyable collection of informative essays, covering, in differing degrees, very many aspects of an ever-changing relationship.

The theme of Mr. Edlin's book is that the wild life of Britain is changing not so much because of the species which have been lost, as because of its enrichment through the deliberate introduction, and sometimes the escape, of new species. To support this thesis he regards, as a member of our fauna or flora, even if only a temporary one, any animal or plant which has bred wild successfully in this country. To me this is a novel idea, but it has given us an invaluable account of our introduced mammals and plants.

It is generally known that the three species of deer usually considered native to Britain have spread widely in recent years, but perhaps few people realize how many other deer are more or less firmly established. The Japanese sika may be found widespread in England and Scotland and there are many places in central and southern England where the Siberian roe deer, the Chinese water deer and even two species of barking deer may be found.

Mr. Edlin writes well of our other mammals and their history, though in considering the descent of feral horses he confuses Przewalski's horse with the tarpan. Readers of Part XLVIII of our journal will be glad to hear again of the greyhound pig, though in a less fantastic and less amusing form. Unfortunately our wild birds are not so satisfactorily treated. The two godwits are lumped together and said to "no longer breed here" and no book published in 1952 should say of the avocet that it "probably nested in Suffolk since 1938".

Lastly Mr. Edlin discusses trees and plants and is indeed in his element. His final chapter "This Monstrous Regiment of

Weeds", which shows how most weeds are parasitic on agriculture and that even if they overwhelm man they cannot survive him, brings to an end a truly fascinating book.

C. L. B.

THE WATCHER AND THE RED DEER. By RICHARD PERRY.
William Hodge and Co., Ltd. 12s. 6d.

The author of this book, which is certainly different from the majority of books on this subject, has set himself the task of describing the everyday life of the Scottish red deer throughout one complete year and almost everything that one associates with red deer seems to have been crammed into its 188 pages.

Richard Perry is probably best known for his work amongst birds, and although this book might therefore be a departure from his usual field of study, the reader soon becomes aware that the "watcher" is treading familiar ground whether it be trailing up through the "Pass of Lochans" to see the autumn rut, or to the "Hill of Calves" where the hinds in June and July will be tending their offspring.

Perry lays great stress on the importance of heather on a deer forest, for not only was it "food in itself", but it "also spread a protective covering over mosses, lichens and berry-plants. . . . Heather was life to the deer. Without heather there would be no red deer, now that the forests had been felled and nearly all the low ground enclosed". He also draws attention to the danger of overstocking, for it was "the winter feeding that determined the stock a deer forest could carry".

Sound as many of his observations are, I wonder what evidence there is to suppose that during the winter months the tips of a stag's antlers are at one moment "so sensitive" and "at other times apparently insensitive to the most fearful blows"—or to believe that "a switch one year was capable of growing perfect antlers the next"? If it was correct, also, to say "that stags were neuter rather than male throughout their lives, except during the annual period of the rut" then one would expect that calves would always be born in June. Whilst the majority are most certainly dropped this month there are also instances of them having been born as late as November and December. And do stags in combat *really* charge at each other "hell for leather" from a distance of "fifty or sixty yards . . . to collide with a thunderous clash"? I think not.

His two chapters Winter and Spring are probably the best, for they cover a period in the deer's life that is witnessed only by