

instruction but entertainment. Nevertheless, adults, anxious to teach the young, buy instructive books to give them. So the *genre* of the instructive book disguised as a novel has come into being. By introducing fictional characters and a plot, and putting the instructive material into the mouths of the characters, the author hopes that his young reader will work his way through the book for its own sake, unaware that he is being instructed—and finish the book more knowledgeable than when he began. I have a feeling that most children see through this ruse and that many of these books are consigned to the back of a cupboard, unread.

The book under review is of this sort. It is a thinly disguised nature lesson. The pictures are charming and the characters quite well drawn (though a small boy who is constantly “instructing” his sister is bound to seem rather a prig) but a questing child who really wants to know about nature lore, the habits of hedgehogs and bats for example, will, I am sure, seek for it in a reference book—preferably one written for children no doubt, but not one disguised as a story. Children not yet interested in nature can be encouraged by an adult prepared to spend time with them and talk to them, but are unlikely to have their interest aroused by a book which they will find a disappointment because it belies the promise of its illustrations and opening pages.

To quote an eight-year-old to whom I lent the book, “the pictures are lovely but nothing happens”; and a ten-year-old, “it was all right I suppose but rather dull.” This is a pity because one realizes that the author has a real love of nature and a desire to pass this on to children. I should like to see a real reference book from his pen, for use “in the field” by nine-year-olds or, perhaps, a straightforward children’s story, set in the country.

M. D.

AND THE RUNNING OF THE DEER. By A. WINDSOR-RICHARDS.
Illustrated by Edward Osmond. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

This is the story of Fawn, a little roe-deer, from her birth until her adulthood and meeting with a young roe-buck. Her adventures are drawn from the lives of real roe-deer observed by the author. Coincidental to Fawn’s story are descriptions of birds, animals and insects and their environments which are, as the author tells us in a short preface, true to nature. The animals in the story are given thoughts and feelings but are

not made to converse in human words and the subject is in no sense treated too anthropomorphically.

The book is charmingly and sensitively written and illustrated. Though in no way comparable, it might perhaps do for a younger child what *Tarka* could do for an older—introduce him to the large world of nature, the small world of an individual animal's life and the idea of man as the destroyer and avenger. A sensitive child might find the description of the chase too distressing although the book, unlike *Tarka*, ends happily, unless the reader asks himself the question, "and what about the next hunt?"

M. D.

SHORTER NOTICES

BIRDS OF THE KRUGER AND OTHER NATIONAL PARKS. Vol. I. Size 8½ in. by 12½ in. 28 pp. 5s. From The Director, National Parks Board of Trustees, P.O. Box 787, Pretoria, South Africa.

This is the first of a series of books which will help visitors to identify the birds they see in the national parks and tell them something about their habits. Sixty-five species, among them herons, birds of prey, ducks and waders, are briefly described and beautifully illustrated. The book, though paper covered, is excellently got up. It is written both in Afrikaans and English.

SURVEY ON THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS. By Dr. IRENÄUS EIBL-EIBESFELDT. U.N.E.S.C.O. 3s. 6d., \$0.75. Postage—Great Britain, 5d.; Abroad, 3d. From H.M. Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London, S.E. 1, and all other national distributors of U.N.E.S.C.O. publications.

This is the report on the biological survey of the Galapagos Islands carried out last year jointly by U.N.E.S.C.O. and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The islands with their endemic fauna, reptiles, birds and mammals are clearly described. The threat to the wonderful species which so excited Darwin—the marine iguanas, the giant tortoises, the flightless cormorants, the finches and very many others are considered. There are sections on the problems of wild life conservation on the islands and how they can be solved. The proposed Darwin Memorial Station for scientific study and active conservation is discussed in some detail. There are clear simple maps and sixty good illustrations.

This is an excellent piece of work on which all concerned are to be congratulated.