

Pheasants

► THE pheasant belongs to a group of birds that is sometimes referred to as the true game birds. It bears a rather close cousinship to partridge, grouse and turkey, which all fall in this same category.

It is generally believed that the American bird is an introduction, not a native. Two kinds were introduced, the Chinese pheasant and the English ring-necked pheasant, so the lineage of today's ring-necked pheasant is undoubtedly mixed. The earliest known successful introduction of pheasant into the eastern United States was in 1887, probably as a replacement for ruffed grouse and bob-white. These native sporting birds suffered serious diminishment in many places as a result of cultivation of their native habitat and over-shooting.

The pheasants that have succeeded in becoming established thrive better in open country than the ruffed grouse, although the latter is better adapted to the climate,

especially in the northern states.

The long graceful tail, which in the male achieves a special glory, seriously hampers the pheasant in winter. When combined with its usual habit of roosting and feeding on the ground, the tail has been known to cause the bird's death. Dragging its tail along the ground after a wet snow-storm as it searches for food, the pheasant picks up snow which with a sudden drop in temperature frequently turns to ice. In the mid-west particularly, where wet snows turning into sleet are common, pheasants have been seen dragging heavy balls of ice that have formed on their tails. Sometimes this mass becomes frozen to the ground and the helpless bird is trapped.

Many an unwary hunter or walker in the woods has been half scared to death by the sudden explosion skywards of a

disturbed female pheasant. This marvelous stratagem is designed for the altruistic purpose of distracting attention while her young scurry to safety. This trick is employed not only when man comes too close for comfort, but whenever any of the pheasant's natural enemies approach the covert. Not only man, but cats, rats, weasels, great horned owls and other predators, are successfully outmaneuvered by this diversionary tactic.

The male does not waste his splendid raiment in monogamy. He struts and crows over a harem of hens who are his by right of battle. But if he revels in the privileges which go with his gorgeous attire, he also recognizes his responsibility. Whenever he discovers a supply of food, he gallantly summons the females to join him.

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• Books of the Week •

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THE AMERICAS: The Search for Hemisphere Security—Laurence Duggan—*Holt*, 242 p., \$3.00. The well-known former Department of State official had nearly finished this account of inter-American relations preceding the Bogota Conference when the work was interrupted by his untimely death. Minor touches to complete it were added by his wife, Helen Duggan, and by two friends, Marshall J. Wolfe and Herschel Brickell.

ANTARCTIC CONQUEST: The Story of the Ronne Expedition 1946-1948—Finn Ronne—*Putnam*, 299 p., \$5.00. The adventure story of an expedition that explored for the first time 250,000 square miles at the end of the world and made aerial photographs of 450,000 square miles, bringing back a wealth of scientific data.

BITUMINOUS COAL ANNUAL 1949: Facts and Figures—*Bituminous Coal Institute*, 192 p., illus., paper, 75 cents. A handbook of information and statistics on an important industry.

BOBWHITES ON THE RISE—Verne E. Davison—*Scribners*, 150 p., illus., \$3.75. A practical book on how to preserve the bobwhites which are at present dying out.

THE BUSINESS HELPER: For the Modern Man Operating a Small Business—Leslie C. Rucker—*Rider*, 133 p., \$2.00. A practical guide to help answer everyday questions that arise to give the little businessman headaches.

CATALOGUE OF BIRDS OF THE AMERICAS AND THE ADJACENT ISLANDS IN FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY—Charles E. Hellmayr and Boardman Conover—*Field Museum of Natural History*, 358 p., paper, \$4.00. Part I, Number 4 of the Museum's Zoological Series, this completes the Catalogue of Birds. The senior author completed the manuscript before his death, but it has been amended by

the junior author who brought the bibliography up to date.

THE ELEMENTS OF GENETICS—C. D. Darlington and K. Mather—*Macmillan*, 446 p., illus., \$3.75. A concise textbook with a valuable glossary.

FIRST AID TEXTBOOK FOR JUNIORS—American Red Cross—*Blakiston*, 132 p., illus., \$1.00. A textbook for teaching first aid in schools and other organizations. A handy book to have in the house to consult "until the doctor comes."

GENETICS OF THE FOWL—F. B. Hutt—*McGraw-Hill*, 590 p., illus., \$6.50. With emphasis on chickens, this work summarizes and surveys the scattered and voluminous literature on heredity and variation in the domestic fowl.

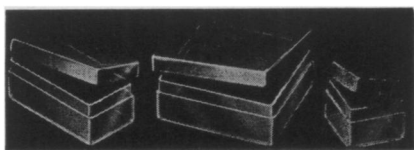
GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF THE TRINITY RIVER TRIBUTARY AREA IN OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS—A. E. Weissenborn and H. B. Stenzel, Eds.—*University of Texas*, 252 p., illus., paper, \$2.50, cloth \$3.75. Report of a cooperative project of the U. S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Economic Geology of the University of Texas. Important in relation to extensive program of conservation and development planned for that area.

GREEN FIELDS ARE GOLD—*Joint Committee on Grassland Farming*, 4th ed., 43 p., illus., 25 cents. Information in question-and-answer form on how to make money by putting easily eroded land into grasslands.

GUIDED MISSILES—A. R. Weyl—*Temple Press*, 139 p., illus., paper, 7 shillings and 6 pence (\$1.05). A short history of guided missiles up to the present time, and a forecast of the future, including a section on "defence against robot aggressors." Of British origin.

GUIDEPOSTS TO MENTAL HEALTH: 1, Life Begins; 2, School Days; 3, Teen Time; 4, Your Job; 5, Your Marriage; 6, The Middle Years; 7, The Golden Age—*New York State Department of Mental Hygiene*, each 6 p., paper, free on request to publisher, Albany, New York. A series of booklets intended to

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