

NATURAL HISTORY MADE LIVING

How dull and dry the subject of natural history can seem, only those children who have suffered at the hands of the wrong sort of book know. Perhaps the writers of modern nature books were sufferers themselves once; at any rate, each year seems to bring forth increasingly delightful volumes suitable for children, interesting information taking the place of heavy technicalities and imagination pervading the whole. Such a book is "THE SEASONS AND THE GARDENER," by H. E. BATES (Cambridge University Press, 6s.). The qualities that have made Mr. Bates famous as a short-story writer are to be found here: imagination, strict accuracy, marked descriptive power, and above all a deep regard and respect for the earth itself, whence springs a similar regard for the rural life. There is little, one feels, that the author does not know about gardening, and he has a real gift for imparting his knowledge in simple terms. C. F. Tunnicliffe's illustrations reach a high standard of accuracy and aesthetic appeal; and for all children who have a garden, and would like to learn how to make it a better garden, this is the perfect Christmas present.

Boys who are keen on agriculture will enjoy reading "TO BE A FARMER'S BOY," by VERNON STOKES and CYNTHIA HARNETT (Blackie, 6s.). The authors give in palatable form a great many useful facts about a farm and its management; and the information is presented by means of an exciting tale of two schoolboys and an erring farm labourer—the only part of the book likely

to be untrue to real life. "REAL BOYS AND GIRLS GO BIRDING," by JACK VAN COEVERING (Lippincott, 9s.) is a well-produced and informative book on American birds. It will interest children who wish to know how to go about the pursuit of ornithology; the author's essays are written with a real understanding of the juvenile mind, and his photographs have unusual charm and character. The photographs in "A BOOK OF ANIMALS" (Studio Publications, 6s.) are also quite exceptionally attractive. MR. BRYAN HOLME, author and editor of the book, has collected a hundred photographs and drawings of animals from various sources. There are sections upon cats, dogs, horses, birds, the farm and the Zoo; and the author's letterpress is exactly right, in both length and content.

The firm of Nelson is doing valuable service in familiarizing children with the lives of animals by means of their "Animals All" series. There are eight of these books, and they cost 3s. 6d. each. Here are two of them: "CHIPS THE ALSATIAN," by LADY KITTY RITSON, tells the story of Rosie and her puppy. As Chips grows up, he is sent to school for a thorough training; and thereafter he saves two lives, including that of his mistress, wins a prize in a show and catches a burglar. "DOMINI THE GOLDEN," by C. W. HENRY, describes the life of a golden plover and its flight down the American continent and up again. Domini's exciting life will endear him to the hearts of adventurous boys.