

EVERY DAY SOME ARE LUCKY

Rainsters are still scarce, but every day someone's patience is rewarded. It may be your turn next. So do keep trying, and one happy day you, too, will be flaunting your smart Rainster.

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BOOK REVIEWS

(continued from previous page)

is now reaching down to the children. There is also this further difference that Mrs. Atkinson did most of the bird-watching at home, and a good deal of it from her bed, while Mr. Richdale did his on sea-headlands or windswept islands where birds were the only inhabitants. But the comparison must not be pushed too far.

Mrs. Atkinson is a bird-lover who happens to be an artist as well. She writes about the things she sees and feels and has no interest in academic questions. Where her observation is close enough—as, for example, her notes on the beaks of sparrows and the claws of more-porks—it is science. But science is not her field. She watches birds, not to make discoveries about them, but to satisfy a feeling for them. Fortunately she has enough skill with her pen to express her feelings in good English and enough talent with pencil and brush to light up her words with pleasing illustrations.

Mr. Richdale's approach is a little different. First he is a zoologist with academic methods and standards, and in the second place he is a man with a message. He is writing a series of books for children because he wants New Zealand to know, in future, if it has not known or cared to know in the past, that trusting our native birds to chance is to risk losing them altogether. It is propaganda, but propaganda warmed by emotion, and informed by eleven years of patient observation and study, involving something like 1,000 visits to rookeries and colonies, and 40,000 miles of car-travel.

NAPOLÉON'S SISTER

IMPERIAL VENUS. By Edgar Maass. Invincible Press, Wellington.

THIS is a pot-boiling book, but it would be misleading to call it salacious. Though it contains some spice, those who buy it for that ingredient only will be disappointed. It is, however, as spicy as the facts permitted it to be, even when the author gave himself the cover of fiction. Fiction much of it is, but it is taking liberty with the word to call it a novel. It is a novelettish biography of Napoleon's sister Pauline, a beauty whose private life kept tongues wagging as long as her beauty lasted. But the Pauline of these pages is about as faithful to the Pauline of history as the Napoleon is; and that is about as faithful as the average film story or radio serial. The book does, however, leave a little behind if you have not much knowledge to begin with—including the melodramatic suggestion that Pauline loved her great brother pathologically.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE GAUNTLET, James Smith. Invincible Press, Wellington.

HIGHLY interesting as light on the "Deep South," and particularly on American small town religion. But not such a blaze of enlightenment as to warrant reviewing at length for New Zealand readers.

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