

ture which his terror cannot fail to magnify into the bulk implied by the circumference of a glittering circle of the most dazzling hues ; his attention at same time being distracted by a hundred glaring eyes meeting his gaze in every direction. A hiss from the head in the centre, which in shape and colors resembles that of a serpent, and a rustling from the trembling quills, are attended by an advance of the most conspicuous portion of this bulk ; which is in itself an action to retreat, being caused by a receding motion of the body of the bird. That must be a bold animal which does not pause

at the sight of such an object ; and short interval is sufficient to insure the safety of the bird ; but if, after all, the enemy should be bold enough to risk an assault, it is most likely that its eagerness or rage would be spent on the glittering appendages, in which case the creature is divested only of that which a little time will again supply. A like explanation may be offered of the use of the long and curious appendages of the head and neck of various kinds of humming-birds, which however feeble, are a pugnacious race.—*Couch's Illustrations of Instinct.*

SCIENCE FOR BEGINNERS.

HOW THE RAIN IS MADE.

A Scottish missionary tells us that a few days after he had begun a mission school at Calcutta, he had the following conversation with one of the boys in it.—Up to that time the boys had been in one of the native schools. The word “rain” occurred in the lesson.

“What is rain?” said the missionary. “Water from the sky.”

“Is it made by the sky itself?”

“No.”

“How then is it made?” “Don’t you know that yourself?” said the boy.

“I think I do, but I wish to find out whether you know.”

“Well,” said the boy, with an air of pride and satisfaction, “I will tell you. It comes from the trunk of Indra’s elephant.”

“Indeed,” replied the missionary, “I have never heard of that before why is it that you believe it?”

“All I can say about it,” answered

the boy, “is, that my Gooro (religious teacher) told me so.”

“But how did your Gooro know it? Did he ever see the elephant himself?” “Oh! no, the elephant is wrapped up in a cloud, as in a covering; and no one can therefore see it.”

“How then come the Gooro to know that the elephant was there at all?” “To be sure,” said the boy, “because the Shastra says so, and what the Shastra says must be so.”

“Well,” said the missionary, “your Gooro in Scotland taught us very differently. Would you like to hear our explanation of rain?”

“Oh yes!” said all the boys.

“Now then, in boiling your rice, what do you see rising?” “Smoke or vapor.”

“When a dry lid is held over it for some time, what follows?”

“The lid gets wet.”

“What makes it wet?” “The vapor.”