Naturgeschichte der nordatlantischen Wale und Robben

Von Prof. Dr. Ernst Hentschel. (Handbuch der Seefischerei Nordeuropas, herausgegeben von H. Lübbert und E. Ehrenbaum, Band 3, Heft 1.) Pp. v+54+10 plates. (Stuttgart: E. Schweizerbart'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (Erwin Nägele), 1937.) 15 gold marks.

THIS is a comparatively small new part of Lübbert and Ehrenbaum's indispensable handbook of the North European fisheries. It is by Dr. Ernst Hentschel, known to us by a useful book on the marine mammals, published twenty-five years ago.

Here we have, in some fifty pages, a brief but sufficient account, well and copiously illustrated, of all the whales, dolphins, seals and walrus which inhabit the North Atlantic region, and have in some cases a wider, even a world-wide, distribution. All the great whales come into the story except the Californian Grey; and even that is said by some to have reached European coasts in former days.

Here and there the book seems to miss something. The herds of Ca'ing whales are mentioned at the Faeroes, but not at the Orkneys, though to them these islands owe their very name; Murie's paper on the same small whale is mentioned, but not his fine monograph on the walrus; the large walrus skull in Fig. 43 looks suspiciously like the Pacific variety; the peculiar teeth of the porpoise, so easily distinguishing it from all the other dolphins, are not mentioned; and the figure of the "gestreifter Delphin", whose "Rücken ist mit einer Anzahl unregelmässiger heller Streifen gezeichnet", merely shows, unless we are greatly mistaken, the scars of a recent encounter with a cuttlefish. D. W. T.

Univers 1937:

quelques aspects de l'astronomie contemporaine. Par Prof. Paul Couderc. Pp. xii+182+12 plates. (Paris: Les Éditions rationalistes, 1937.) 20 francs.

THIS work serves a double purpose. Almost entirely devoid of mathematical formulæ, it is accessible to general readers who are interested in astronomy, though practically ignorant of its most recent developments. Nevertheless, the author has never dealt with any subject in a superficial manner, and it is amazing how he has condensed into such a small space the results of modern research, while still maintaining accuracy and precision in his descriptions. In the work we find all the most up-to-date information on nebulæ, stellar spectra, galactic rotation, proper motions, the expanding universe, the age of the universe, novæ, cosmic clouds, etc. Prof. Couderc has kept very closely in touch with every phase of the subjects, which he handles with consummate skill and with wonderful clarity in his descriptions.

The book is illustrated by ten plates, some of which are due to the first telescope installed at Forcalquier, the future astrophysical station in France. Altogether we have found it a most readable work. M. D.

Astronomy for the Layman

by Frank Reh. Pp. xviii+308+16 plates. (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1936.) 12*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS work is intended for the average reader who has little knowledge of astronomy, and is written in simple and non-technical language. Some may wonder why the author commenced with the sidereal universe and ended up with the solar system; but this is a minor point which will be lost sight of in the clear and interesting presentation of salient matters in astronomy. In the foreword by Dr. Clyde Fisher reference is made to the wealth of poetical quotations which appear in the different chapters, and many will be grateful for this anthology, ranging from the days of Hebrew cosmogony up to modern times.

A considerable portion nearly one hundred pages is devoted to descriptions of the constellations, with numerous diagrams. There are also many illustrations and photographs in the text. The book should stimulate readers to pursue more fully the subjects dealt with in the cursory fashion which is inevitable in the wide survey taken by the author. In the very brief discussion of various matters it is impossible to avoid expressions which may be misleading. Thus, on p. 235, readers might gain the impression that the moon is approaching the earth at present, owing to tidal friction. It is true that our satellite will some day approach us after it has receded a long way from its present orbit, but it is not approaching us now. In Chapter xvi there is little or nothing to show the distinction between the planetismal theory of Chamberlin and Moulton and the tidal theory of Jeans and Jeffreys. These are minor blemishes which do not detract from the value of a very interesting work. M. D.

Electron Tubes in Industry

By Keith Henney. Second edition. Pp. viii+539. (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1937.) 30*s*.

THE author is not so much concerned with fundamental scientific ideas as the practical application of electronic devices, and he does this very thoroughly, with ample references to original literature. The general characteristics of vacuum, gaseous, and photo-sensitive tubes are explained and suitable applications indicated, some of which are surprising. The text forms an ideal reference book and should be widely known. L. E. C. H.

The Methodology of Educational Research

By Prof. Carter V. Good, Prof. A. S. Barr and Douglas E. Scales. (Appleton Series in Supervision and Teaching). Pp. xxi+882. (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1936.) 16*s*. net.

A SURVEY of the chief methods used in educational research, together with a list of those problems which the authors consider suitable for university research workers.