

After having found such "beds," the travellers came across a family of bears, which had their lair at the foot of a tree, hidden by dense foliage. When dislodged, some of them climbed about rapidly.

The beautiful Morpho butterflies were abundant at places, and not at all shy. On the contrary, they alighted upon the table and sucked from the dishes during breakfast. At Cuenca Dr. Festa was treated to the spectacle of a fierce battle, which lasted all day long, and on the following day the victor entered the town after a loss of 600 dead. A rather full and interesting account is given of the Iivaros tribe of Indians, who, not yet appreciating the value of money, required knives, guns, needle and thread, &c., for barter. The wilder they were, the better they were as collectors. Their special weapon is the blow-pipe. A favourite ornament of both sexes, besides painting themselves, is a wooden lip-plug, one inch long and half an inch thick, with pendants of needles, the brightly-coloured wings of beetles, &c. The house is large, of the type of the communal house, the sexes occupying different quarters of the same large room, and to each woman's bed are tied several fierce watchdogs.

In the mountains of the province of Carchi were procured a considerable number of antique specimens of pottery and some crania.

Unfortunately, this book is written mostly in the style of a diary, which does not well lend itself to generalisations, but rather to matter-of-fact records of animals and plants observed. It would have been interesting to read how the Ecuadorean civilisation appeared to an Italian, a cultured representative of another Latin race. The English-speaking civilisation is too divergent from the Latin-American in almost every walk of life really to understand it and to appreciate its many good points. However, the author is modest, and enlivens his account of the many things he has done and seen with but little humour.

The book, printed in excellent type and on very good paper, and adorned with some seventy or eighty, mostly full-paged, beautifully reproduced photographs, seems wonderfully cheap for the price of 8s.

#### AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS.

*The Animals of Australia. Mammals, Reptiles, and Amphibians.* By A. H. S. Lucas and W. H. Dudley le Souëf. Pp. xi+327. (Melbourne : Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd., 1909.) Price 15s. net.

MESSRS. LUCAS AND LE SOUËF have given us a book which ought to find a very hearty welcome, especially amongst Australian naturalists. Whilst intended primarily for the general reader, the arrangement and treatment are throughout thoroughly scientific, and the illustrations, many of which are from original photographs, are, on the whole, very good. The full-page photograph of a wheelbarrow on p. 179 is perhaps a little superfluous, however. It is true that the wheelbarrow contains a snake, but it is

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a very small one, and a much better photograph of the same snake is given on another page.

The information that the number of Australian species of Eutheria is the same as that of the marsupials (106) comes rather as a surprise, even if, as we suppose, it includes introduced species.

The authors have a melancholy tale to tell of the rate at which the marsupials are being exterminated for the sake of their skins. It appears that no fewer than 873,837 "opossum" skins were offered for sale in the Sydney market alone during the year 1908, and other species in hardly less alarming numbers.

The section dealing with the snakes is one of the most interesting. Death from snake-bite appears to be rare in Australia, although many of the species are poisonous, and some of them deadly. In case of snake-bite, however, most people prefer to err on the safe side, though there are probably not many who have so much to show for their mistake as the man who exhibits to his friends a bottle containing one of his own fingers and a perfectly harmless snake by which it had been bitten! Snake-stories form an important part of the literature of the Australian bush, but we do not recollect having heard before about the tiger-snake which was found enjoying a sun-bath balanced on the topmost wire of a fence, with the folds of the body nicely adjusted on each side to maintain the balance. We are told that the Australian snakes do not charm or fascinate their prey in any way (p. 156). If this is so, we are at a loss to understand the photograph on p. 181, which, at first sight, at any rate, looks like a snake fascinating a hen; perhaps, however, the hen is refusing to be fascinated.

One difficulty which has to be overcome by the writer of a popular book on natural history in a "new" country is the absence of a popular terminology. To some extent Messrs. Lucas and le Souëf have endeavoured to supply this deficiency; notably in the case of the Agamid lizards, for which they suggest the name "Dragons." Thus *Amphibolurus maculatus* is to be known as the "Military Dragon," presumably on account of its brilliant colours; but we should hardly have thought that "Queen Adelaide's Dragon" was an appropriate rendering of *Amphibolurus adelaideensis*, the termination of the specific name suggesting a geographical rather than a personal reference. In a few cases the Australian public has already taken the matter of nomenclature into its own hands, as in the well-known case of "Goana," which is, of course, a corruption of "Iguana," a name popularly but erroneously applied to the "lace monitor" (*Varanus varius*).

Although the book does not profess to deal with the fishes, the authors have not been able to resist the temptation to include an account of *Ceratodus*, evidently on the ground that it is "part fish, part amphibian." The amphibian part seems hardly sufficient to justify its inclusion, but we must admit that the temptation was very strong.

The book is well got up, though the paper is unpleasantly glossy. We can strongly recommend it to all who are interested in Australian natural history.