

*The Scenery of England: a Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country.* By Dr. Vaughan Cornish. Pp. 125 + 8 plates. (London: The Council for the Preservation of Rural England, 1932.) 3s. 6d. net.

DR. CORNISH here presents to us the beauty of England in a succession of charming word-pictures from his rich store of personal impressions of the many types of landscape which the country affords, including the Lakes, the Peak, the Fens, the Cotswolds, Dartmoor, the New Forest, the Dorset coast, Wiltshire downs and many other parts. This, in a book of so modest a compass, should be a more effective method of rousing public interest in the work of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England than a more categorical description of the country, county by county, or district by district. Dr. Cornish throughout lays stress on the importance of making buildings harmonise with the landscape, and he concludes with appendixes on the aims and objects of the Council and powers and duties of affiliated local authorities.

The Council's attitude towards modern developments is thoroughly sane and well-balanced, emphasising the complementary relationship between town and country and the necessity for planning England as a whole, never suggesting that it would be either possible or desirable to hamper the healthy growth of cities. The face of England as regards extent of area is still predominantly rural by a wide margin, and it would no doubt be to the advantage of the nation that it should remain so. Hence it seems to us that the efforts and deliberations of the Council should always be made with an eye to the possibility that the population will continue to increase indefinitely.

If the present huge population of England were ever to double itself and remain concentrated in a few unwieldy 'conurbations', it is difficult to see what could be done to prevent a large fraction of the area of the country from wearing a heavy suburban cloak, even though the remaining rural districts might still be solitary and the remoter mountain regions practically uninhabited wilderness as at present. L. C. W. B.

*The Call of the Bush: Wanderings of a Nature Man on the Murray River.* By Harold Priest. Pp. 240 + 16 plates. (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1932.) 12s. 6d. net.

THIS is the record of a long tramp along the course of the Murray River, the author shifting for himself and 'living on the country' as he went, though he ultimately joined up with a couple of cattle-men and accompanied them for a time. His observations on the great river and the various human and animal types which frequent it are varied and they are interestingly told, but the book would have been even better than it is had there been more detailed natural history and less reflective

'padding'. One interesting observation is on the coloration of the ticks infesting the common Australian monitor (miscalled 'guana' or 'goanna'), which are black when adhering to the black areas of the reptile's skin, and yellow when on the pale ground, and this, as the author says, suggests that this adaptive hue, which renders them very difficult to see, means that they have had to protect themselves against removal by other agencies as well as their hosts. Another interesting fact recorded is that domestic cats kept in the wilds bring their kittens fishes as well as other animals, indicating that the animals' well-known fondness for these has its foundation in a natural preying habit.

*Pila (the Apple-Snail).* By Dr. Bains Prasad. (The Indian Zoological Memoirs on Indian Animal Types, edited by Dr. K. N. Bahl, No. 4.) Pp. xi + 83. (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1932.) 2 rupees.

THIS laboratory manual on the snail now studied in most eastern universities as a type of gastropod mollusc is itself a model of what such a book ought to be. It is well illustrated, and contains not only a description of the anatomy of the subject and practical directions for its dissection, but also a synopsis of the eight Indian species of the genus *Pila*, and some interesting bionomical notes. From these it is plain that the apple-snail is the most versatile of the gastropods—or indeed, of all Mollusca. Usually a denizen of fresh-water, it can, in the case at least of *P. globosa*, tolerate that which is brackish; usually vegetarian, it may eat dead animal matter. It has both aquatic and aerial respiration at its command; it can swim as well as crawl in water, and yet can travel overland and even climb trees, while it lays its eggs on land, and specimens left dry in a cupboard rivalled the celebrated desert-snail of the British Museum by being found alive after five years.

*The Animals came to Drink.* By Cherry Kearton. Pp. 189 + 31 plates. (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 6s. net.

In the introductory note the author states that he would "be thankful if this book could act as a counterblast to the many animal stories, so constantly appearing, which are based on utterly false or distorted natural history", and his desire will certainly be fulfilled if this volume achieves the popularity it deserves. The reader's attention is held from start to finish and the genuine ring of truth is established as, in the form of a story, the writer recalls his own long experience of African wild life. The narrative centres round the wanderings of an *impalla*; the insistent demand for water results in the description of many incidents which show the author's patience and keenness of observation. The volume is well illustrated.