

L'Art des Iles Marquises

Par Willowdean C. Handy. Pp. 56+43 plates. (Paris: Les Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1938.) 75 francs.

MRS. HANDY, who in 1920-21 accompanied her husband, Dr. Craighill Handy, on the Bayard Dominick expedition of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum of Honolulu to the Marquesas, there devoted herself to the study of the tattooing for which the islanders have always been noted. Her observation of this practice, highly important both in its ritual and in its decorative aspects, has afforded her an exceptional insight into the artistic activities and conceptions of the people, of which she here gives an admirable summary, while analysing the highly conventionalized designs into their component motives. Of these motives the most important is the human form, a logical outcome of the idea, inherent in Marquesan thought, that to make anything is an act of creation, standing in definite evolutionary relation to the first act of procreation, by which Alea, the celestial father, fertilized One—'u', the earth-mother.

In a brief comparative study, the author indicates her conclusions as to the relation of Marquesan art on one side to the archaic Maori art, with its divergent development owing to the technique of the chisel, and on the other to the art of ancient Peru, with which there are indications that there may be affinities.

Canoes of Oceania

By A. C. Haddon and James Hornell. Vol. 2: The Canoes of Melanesia, Queensland and New Guinea. (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 28.) Pp. vi+342. (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1937.) n.p.

IN the second volume of this joint study of the canoes of Oceania by Dr. A. C. Haddon and Mr. James Hornell, the former has brought together and analysed an enormous mass of detail relating to the canoes of Melanesia and adjacent waters. It is drawn in part from personal observation, in part from published, or in some instances unpublished, observations of travellers and ethnologists, sometimes going back to the earliest recorded visits to the islands by Europeans. On the whole, this latter source is more satisfactory than the corresponding material under contribution in the preceding volume, which dealt with Polynesia.

The problem, or rather series of problems, of the canoe in Melanesia, to which, as is well known, Dr. Haddon has devoted many years of study, is infinitely more complex than that of Polynesia. Not only is there the question of modifications possible through contact in trade, etc., but also this region has been subjected to racial and cultural drifts which have left their mark on the canoe perhaps as much as on any other element in culture. This applies not only to general lines of construction but also to details, often, it might appear, of relatively little significance. Thus, for example, in the Massim area of New Guinea, which is remarkable for the decorative carving of its canoes, Dr. Haddon is able to

discriminate between no fewer than four areas of difference, according to details of outrigger, sail, etc., while in the area of marginal communities in north-eastern Melanesia, south-east of the Solomons (Tikopia, Rennel, Ontong, Java, etc.), he shows how the canoes not only differ from those of their Melanesian neighbours, but also show traces of Polynesian and Micronesian influence, corresponding to differences in physique, language and culture.

Biology

Genetics:

an Introduction to the Study of Heredity. By Prof. Herbert Eugene Walter. Fourth edition. Pp. xvii+412. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938.) 12s. 6d. net.

IT is unfortunate that the fourth edition of this book should have been published in its present form. The earlier editions provided an interesting account of the work of the early investigators and reflected the influence of this work on the current biological thought. The present edition also contains much which is interesting from a historical point of view. The author's lack of appreciation of modern genetics is shown, however, by the description of crossing-over in the two-strand stage, the emphasis placed on Weismannism, the implication that the genes for sex are on the sex chromosome alone, and by the stress laid on the arbitrary division of genes into lethals, modifiers and other categories. Much loose thinking vitiates the praiseworthy attempt to express genetical facts in popular language. "Eugenics not Bluegenics", "The cytological approach tries to find out what is the make-up and behaviour of genes", "Translocations and deficiencies are bound to cause embarrassment later when *synapsis* takes place, because some of the *genes* in the *mitotic* dance become wallflowers without a partner", are some examples of phrases which might have been expressed differently.

F. W. S.

The Way of Birds

By R. B. Talbot Kelly. Pp. 135. (London: Wm. Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1937.) 25s. net.

THIS is a volume of large format, consisting mainly of coloured and other drawings—seventy-two in all—with a few lines of text about each. It is a book of birds as the artist sees them in life, and not of illustrations in which detail is carefully checked from museum specimens. In a short introductory chapter, called "Feathers", Captain Kelly expounds the difference. "I used to think that herons were always blue-grey in colour. But I have seen a heron look blue, and pale ash-grey, and purple-grey, and golden-buff in different lights at varying times of day. . . . The beauty of the feathered coat is that we perceive it as a whole; as a coherent, fluid vestment, not as a collection of separate feathers". On the other hand, "the scientifically accurate mapping of a bird's plumage pattern is a specialised form of art, or perhaps craftsmanship". A second chapter, called "Wings", discusses form and movement—particularly in flight.