

### Diseases of Potatoes, Sugar Beet and Legumes

By Dr. W. A. R. Dillon Weston. Pp. viii + 86. (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1948.) 4s. net.

THIS book was written for farmers and students, and it seems also to be suitable for senior classes in schools. The information is well chosen and reliable, and it is presented in such a way that non-scientific readers can, with a little perseverance, obtain a sound working knowledge of the nature and treatment of the diseases considered.

The 'pictorial strip' method of illustrating the life-histories and treatments of pests and diseases may be said to be Dr. Dillon Weston's invention, and readers of *Agriculture* are already familiar with its uses. Some of these illustrations are delightful, and they do achieve, to a great extent, their object of providing a complete 'bird's-eye' view of each problem; but the individual pictures are frustratingly small, and the minute text accompanying them introduces many scientific names and special terms, which are doubtless useful to students but might easily prove to be sources of irritation—to farmers of the older school, for example. This effect is also produced, at least on the present reviewer, by the rather lavish use of the rhetorical question; there are nine between pages 7 and 15.

The diseases described are mostly of known economic importance. A few of less importance, such as sugar beet mosaic virus, are given brief reference. Mention might have been made of the virus diseases of legumes. Although little is known of their economic importance in Great Britain, they are very common, and must cause some damage to crops, such as field peas. There is a danger that such damage might be wrongly attributed to fungus attack or nutritional disorders. In general the ground has been very well covered, and this will be a most useful book.

M. A. W.

### The Lungfish and the Unicorn

An Excursion into Romantic Zoology. By Willy Ley. Pp. 254. (London: Hutchinson's Scientific and Technical Publications, 1948.) 10s. 6d. net.

NOTHING captures the imagination of man more than the thought that somewhere, hidden behind the green, moist walls of almost impenetrable jungle, lurks a reptilian survivor of the prehistoric past. In this well-documented and intelligent book Mr. Willy Ley discusses not only the popular rumours and the 'living fossils' such as the tuatera, platypus and lungfish, but also the historical and mythological background to the strange creatures of legend and anti-quity.

Though but a small book it contains a fund of interesting data upon the weird and the wonderful. The unicorn, dragon and sea-monster, etc., are discussed, together with the literary and scientific foundations of the belief in giant men.

One of the most interesting chapters is "The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate", which deals with many odd tales brought back by seamen and explorers concerning the dragon. Mr. Ley believes that it is not impossible for the *Brontosaurus*, or some similar Mesozoic saurian, to exist to-day in central Africa—an interesting theory.

It would be, of course, impossible to include everything in a book of this size; but it is somewhat surprising to find reference to neither the Norwegian kraken nor to the 'abominable snow-men' of the

Himalayas—two enigmas that have perplexed the world for some considerable time. However, on the whole "The Lungfish and the Unicorn" is an excellent book, written in an easy, conversational style and capturing the interest throughout.

The illustrations, to some of which a full page might well have been devoted, are taken either from the classics or from later zoologies, while some were specially drawn by Prof. Gustav Wolf and are very suited to a work of this nature.

### Animals We Use

Written and illustrated by Arnrid Johnston. Pp. iv + 32. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1948.) 10s. 6d. net.

IT has been a common complaint since the teaching of biology became widely accepted in schools that many pupils have acquired a considerable knowledge of the insides of the 'types' prescribed for dissection, but have remained largely unaware of those animals and plants the evolution of which has run close to that of man. The late Sir D'Arcy Thompson, for example, often lamented that, after high promise, biology as a school subject had descended to a level in which pupils were being taught much about the morphology and physiology of local species, but were learning little of the habitat and habits of the larger animals throughout the world.

The appearance of Arnrid Johnston's book is, therefore, much to be welcomed, and, with its thirty-two pages of lively coloured drawings, should be most useful to young and old by showing the contribution animals have made throughout the ages to civilization all over the world both because of their co-operation with men and because of their innumerable marketable products. Much hard work has gone into the compilation of this book, and the explanatory captions provide an effective complement to the attractive drawings. The book should prove an admirable partner to the author's previous work, "Animal Families and Where They Live".

T. H.

### Akim-Tokotu

An Omen of the Gold Coast. By Dr. M. J. Field. Pp. viii + 211 + 22 plates. Accra Government Printing Department. (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies)

DR. M. J. FIELD, the author of two valuable works on the Ga people of the Gold Coast territory, was employed by the Gold Coast Government in 1938 to investigate the native system of finance and of allegiance and jurisdiction in one of the confederations of the Western Akim peoples. She builds on the work of Rattray and others, who have described the political and legal system of the Akan peoples to the south-east of the Akim area, who have similar customs; but her own study is an intensive investigation of particular areas written from personal observations made in some seventy towns. She writes clearly and well, and her work is always stimulating. She has valuable material to give on the origin of these towns, their finances and their system of land tenure. She also gives accounts of kinship usages, marriage, inheritance and succession, and some of the traditional ritual, as well as new cults at fetish shrines. The result is a very useful extension to our knowledge of the peoples of the Gold Coast. It is a pity that the material was held up from publication for so long and has been apparently so severely censored by the Government, particularly the sections on health.