

War, developed a piston core-sampler capable of taking cores 60 ft. in length. Prof. Hans Pettersson, realizing the significance of this and other recently developed geophysical techniques, organized with great success the Swedish Deep-Sea Expedition (1947-48).

This book, based on Prof. Pettersson's Silliman Lectures at Yale University, is a fascinating description of the scientific results of the Expedition, together with a summary of the results of other recent expeditions. Few technical terms have been used, and the book is intended for the non-specialist. The author's style is vigorous and clear, and his critical examination of theories is of great interest. There is an interesting chapter on deep-sea radium and the geochronology of the ocean floor. Since Pettersson's pioneer work on radium determinations, published in 1930, a possibility has existed of developing a time-scale for deep-sea cores based on radioactive decay. Piggot and Urry were first in this field. It would now seem from the detailed radium, ionium and uranium measurements that the problem is far more complicated than suggested by the investigations of Piggot and Urry.

J. D. H. WISEMAN

Birds and Mammals of Shetland

By L. S. V. Venables and U. M. Venables. Pp. xii + 391 + 8 plates. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1955.) 30s. net.

THIS is an ambitious book, the authors setting themselves the formidable task of describing the birds and mammals of that interesting northern group of islands known as the Shetlands; not content with this wide field, they give appendices on the introduction of the common frog and common toad to Shetland, and they wind up with a list of plant flowering dates.

The volume begins with a short account of Shetland naturalists and visiting naturalists, goes on to consider Shetland habitats and then proceeds to status changes in Shetland birds. It is obvious that the authors take a keen interest in the waxing and waning of species and have found these islands an excellent place for population studies. After this, they work through the list of Shetland mammals and follow with the birds, dealing with them species by species in a very thorough manner.

They are to be congratulated on a painstaking effort and on a book that will be of much assistance to visitors to the islands.

FRANCES PITT

Introduction to Virology

By Dr. Gilbert Dalldorf. Pp. ix + 102. (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas; Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1955.) 25s.

DR. GILBERT DALLDORF'S little book sets out to tell the practitioner and hospital pathologist the simpler facts about viruses and virus diseases of man. His hope is to convince them that virus infections can be studied, from the routine and even the research point of view, with the aid of comparatively simple equipment. He is very right to try to dispel the notion that it is an esoteric subject, only comprehensible to a select few. The commoner virus diseases are discussed from the clinical and laboratory aspects. Measles and chicken pox appear, oddly enough, under skin diseases and not under "Poxes and Rashes". "The Simple Common Techniques" are described, but scarcely in sufficient detail to allow of their being performed without

reference to larger works, and unfortunately there are very few references. The word "subspecies" is used erroneously on p. 11; and on p. 59 and again on p. 87 the author makes the astonishing statement that latent infection with herpes simplex virus occurs frequently in normal rabbits.

Michelangelo

A Study in the Nature of Art. By Adrian Stokes. Pp. 154 + 24 plates. (London: Tavistock Publications, Ltd., 1955.) 25s. net.

THIS book is of somewhat unusual character, and perhaps valuable on that account. It is a brave effort to get beneath the surface of a tempestuous and majestic personality, that of Michelangelo (1475-1564). Unluckily, the author's style is often so obscure as to baffle the reader considerably, even if he is able and willing—as many readers will be—to see their subject in terms of Freud's psychology. The advantage, however, of this analytical study is, of course, that the basic nature of art—as a sensitive function of environment—is revealed stripped of adventitious material and is thus of aesthetic significance.

After some introductory matter, there is a discussion of the master's visual works, followed by an able analysis of his poems. There are copious notes, and a couple of appendixes, one concerned with iconography and the other with the Medici chapel. In addition, there are several illustrations.

All this leads to an appraisal of the unique contribution of Michelangelo to humanist art. Painting, sculpture, architecture, all bore witness to this tireless mind, melancholic and 'prickly', wearing itself out in superhuman feats of bodily endurance. His mannerisms were rugged, and as Lomazzo declared in 1590, Michelangelo reached the knowledge of harmonic proportions by way of music. Even his own body (on this showing) was built harmonically.

F. I. G. RAWLINS

B.B.C. Handbook, 1956

Pp. 287. (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1955.) 5s.

THIS handbook, besides giving a general picture of broadcasting in Britain during the year ended March 31, 1955, and lists of representative programmes broadcast during that period, constitutes a very convenient reference work on the B.B.C. as well as a guide to its working. An account of the constitution is followed by notes on controversial and political broadcasting, and compared with last year's handbook there are fuller accounts of the External Services and of the re-broadcasting of the B.B.C. programmes throughout the world. More information is also included about the advisory councils and committees. Of particular interest to the scientist are the section describing the work and responsibilities of the Engineering Departments and that discussing some problems of reception, particularly very high frequency.

Details are given of the membership of the various councils and committees and of the senior staff, the balance sheet and accounts for the year, some analyses of income and expenditure, and tables of the totals and distribution of broadcasting licences, etc. The handbook includes the text of the royal charter, licence and agreement; and a good bibliography and index add to its value as an accessible and comprehensive source of information on the B.B.C. and its activities.