

### The Modern Universe

By Dr. Raymond A. Lyttleton. Pp. 207+16 plates. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1956.) 16s. net.

THIS survey of modern astronomy for 'ordinary readers' is an expanded version of the very successful talks that Dr. R. A. Lyttleton gave during 1955 in the Television Service of the B.B.C. Lyttleton deserves great credit for discharging an obligation laid upon professional scientists to give some account of their stewardship to such readers. His colleagues will admire his adroitness in conveying an astonishing amount of information with such lucidity and conciseness while forgoing all technicalities. They will also, almost certainly, commend his choice of topics. For his object is to describe recent progress and current problems, without forgetting how much of what is traditional knowledge to professionals is new to each fresh generation of readers. So he proceeds outwards from the Earth to the confines of the expanding universe with a wise adjustment of diminishing detail. He thus shows the variety and difficulty of problems on our astronomical doorstep before sketching some of the more general problems presented by the larger and remoter regions of the universe. Incidentally, one of our local astronomical problems to which Lyttleton gives particular attention may soon become topical. A comet now approaching the Sun is expected to give the best opportunity for many years for studying the nature of such objects; it will be of much interest to see if behaviour like that shown (p. 108) in sketches of Halley's comet is confirmed with the use of modern telescopes.

The book is splendidly illustrated by astronomical photographs from the great observatories. As the reviewer has already found, it can be enthusiastically recommended to inquirers who ask quite literally for an introduction to 'the modern universe'.

W. H. McCREA

### Whitehead's Philosophical Development

A Critical History of the Background of Process and Reality. By Nathaniel Lawrence. Pp. xxii+370. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1956.) 37s. 6d.

THE urge to read books about books rather than to seek out the original sources is always with us. It is perhaps at its strongest when the fountain-head is not hard to find, but is hard to interpret. So it has always been with the philosophical writings of Alfred North Whitehead, from the appearance of his first major work in this field (1919) until well into the late nineteen-thirties and perhaps beyond. As Prof. N. Lawrence remarks, Whitehead's epistemological development was not 'linear'; it might almost be described as following a kind of logarithmic spiral, spotlighting the origin time and again at different orientations and distances.

This, together with Whitehead's individualistic type of vocabulary, has often been the near-despair of students, as indeed it was of the present reviewer some thirty years ago. Prof. Lawrence not only traces the path through such entities as 'event-particles', 'puncts' and 'rects', but also brings the reader abreast of something like a clear image of the spatio-temporal relations as they gradually unfold in the master's work.

There are passages thus clarified which seem to be relevant to the task of the present-day 'directional' biologist, in his rejection of too mechanical a view of the mind-body problem. Historically, and on the grand scale, Whitehead's thought comes very close to that of Anaxagoras of Clozonomae in claiming for his Creator (or *νοῦς*) not only supremacy as master-builder, but also as artist.

F. I. G. RAWLINS

### The Human Species

A Biology of Man. By Anthony Barnett. (Pelican Book No. A341.) Pp. xiii+351+32 plates. (Harmondsworth, Mdx.: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1957.) 5s.

IN view of its many publications over a number of years on specialized biological subjects, it is surprising that no Penguin Book has previously appeared addressed to the general reader beginning the study of the biology of man. The omission has now been remedied in a book which includes sections on heredity and reproduction, evidence and theories of evolution, the races of man, eugenics, differences between men and women, the origins of man, his health and nutrition and his demography. The author has benefited by help given by a number of distinguished biologists to produce a book of wide range which still, fortunately, bears the design and imprint of one author. Errors are very few, although some sections receive superficial treatment while others are treated cavalierly. The scant reference to endocrine organs is surprising, while a chapter on health and disease can scarcely claim to be complete without some reference to cancer. Thirty-two plates, many diagrams, an extensive bibliography and a well-devised index add to the value of what should prove to be another Penguin success.

T. H. HAWKINS

### Diseases of Garden Plants

By A. Beaumont. Pp. 152+16 plates. (London: W. H. and L. Collingridge, Ltd.; New York: Transatlantic Arts, Inc., 1956.) 25s. net.

THERE are probably few people better qualified to write this type of book than Mr. A. Beaumont, who has, for some thirty years, been advising growers on plant diseases, first in South-West England and more recently in Lancashire and Yorkshire. A book such as this has been needed for some time because, as the author points out, no book dealing with diseases of ornamental plants has been published in Britain since 1906. Mr. Beaumont's book deals with these diseases and with diseases of other garden plants. It is based on a series of articles which were published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for the practical man whose knowledge of botany was expected to be slight. After two introductory and general chapters on the symptoms and control of plant diseases there follows a series of chapters on diseases of different groups of garden plants. The symptoms of each disease are described briefly and clearly and methods of controlling the disease are given when this is appropriate. A most attractive feature of the book are the sixty-three photographic illustrations of specific diseases; these with very few exceptions are excellent.

There are a few minor points which might be corrected in a further edition, but they in no way detract from the value of the book, which is very well produced, is reasonably priced and will be most useful to the practical man and to students of horticulture and allied subjects.