

plexes. Again the information is summarized in tables, each giving possible experimental results and the conclusions that may be drawn from them. The argument is developed at length in the text, and many examples are given.

"Dinitrogen Trioxide", by I. R. Beattie, is a short critical account of an interesting compound, with emphasis on physical aspects. It can be read and comprehended in less than 2 h by someone unfamiliar with the subject, and thus fulfils the aim of the series. It is difficult to make informative comments on the article by A. D. Liehr, "The Coupling of Vibrational and Electronic Motions in Degenerate and Nongenerate Electronic States of Inorganic and Organic Molecules, Part 3, Nongenerate Electronic States". A summary of the chief results of the three parts is given in this concluding article.

J. S. COE

### The Birds of the British Isles

Vol. 12: Stercorariidae, Alcidae, Rallidae, Tetraonidae, Phasianidae. By Dr. David Armitage Bannerman. Illustrated by George E. Lodge. Pp. xiii+443+31 plates. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1963.) 63s. net.

VOLUME 12 of *The Birds of the British Isles* completes the enterprise that began with the publication of the first two volumes in 1953, when I described the series as "a work on British birds in the grand manner . . . sumptuously produced, beautifully illustrated, and written in a leisured style, with care and distinction" (*Nature*, 174, 327; 1954). The standard has been fully maintained in the volumes that have since appeared annually. The entire work is handsome to possess, pleasant to read and valuable for reference. With meticulous scholarship, Dr. Bannerman has assembled and critically assessed a body of information about all the species of birds that are in any sense British. In doing this, he has taken a world-wide view of his subjects and has not confined himself to those aspects of their lives that can be observed within the British Isles; even the utmost rarities in the way of accidental vagrants are fully documented by evidence from the countries where they are at home. The author has both read and travelled extensively; he has also drawn directly on the knowledge of many others whom he has invited to contribute on special points. The work thus contains much that is not readily to be found elsewhere.

The author has throughout closely associated the name of his artist, the late George Lodge, with his own. Lodge was supreme in this sphere in his day, and happily many of the plates represent his best work. All had been painted some time before publication began, and indeed the artist was an old man when he died in 1954. It was he who had originally suggested the work; and his generosity facilitated production.

This final volume covers the skua, auk, rail, grouse and pheasant families.

LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON

### Faune de Madagascar (Publiée sous les auspices du Gouvernement de la République Malgache)

XVI. Crustacés Décapodes: Portunidae. Par Alain Crosnier. Pp. 154+27 planches. The plates are i-xviii comprising 27 figures (photos). (Bondy (Seine). Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer, 1962.) n.p.

IN a recent addition to the *Faune de Madagascar* series of publications (No. 16, "Crustacés Décapodes, Portunidae", 1962), Dr. Alain Crosnier has monographed the swimming crabs. The total of 73 species includes several not yet reported from Madagascar but which probably do occur there since they have been reported from South Africa and either Mauritius or the Seychelles. Of this total, 23 also occur in South African, 33 in Australian, and 33 in Japanese waters. While this work was

in progress. Prof. Stephenson and his co-workers published a number of papers on Australian swimming crabs. Crosnier has, therefore, been able to translate their key to the determination of the sub-families of this large family. He has also been able to dispense with full bibliographical references and has restricted his lists to original references, those referring to Madagascar, and very recent ones.

Technical terms are kept to a minimum and are explained by means of simple diagrams so that non-specialists can use the keys and follow the descriptions of species, most of which are illustrated. The line drawings and photographs are exceptionally clear. Difficulties were encountered in naming many of the species, but where possible type specimens were re-examined or material was sent for comparison with types to various institutions. No mention is made of the economic importance, if any, of the larger species; but *Scylla serrata*, a supposedly coastal species, was found in the stomachs of more than thirty tiger sharks taken over deep water far from land. The monograph should prove useful to all who wish to identify material not only from East Africa but also from any part of the Indo-West Pacific region.

I. GORDON

### Chromosome Botany and the Origins of Cultivated Plants

By Prof. C. D. Darlington. Pp. xvi+231. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1963.) 36s.

IT is seven years since *Chromosome Botany* was published. *Chromosome Botany and the Origins of Cultivated Plants*, which may be looked on as a welcome second edition, has a new section on the origins of cultivated plants in which Prof. Darlington has brought together the facts and the opinions on the evolution and origins of cultivated plants from all relevant sources—botany, plant breeding, genetics and cytology, history and anthropology. He has synthesized these diverse and numerous data into a readable and unified account. In its scope and cohesion it is in the direct line of descent from the works of Darwin, de Candolle and Vavilov.

The principles on which the 'origins' are based are elaborated in the first part of the book. Here the reader will find, among the well-known classical ideas, several new and stimulating concepts. There is 'mutual selection' which is variously illustrated throughout the book, for example, selection of the breeding system is accompanied by a selection in the behaviour of chromosomes at meiosis. These two quite different systems must be mutually adjusted by simultaneous selection. Examples are taken from all kinds of plants and some animals and, thanks to a note by Prof. E. B. Ford, we see that the principles are also of great value in the study of animal ecology and speciation.

The text, although highly condensed, contains adequate references, making the book not only readable but also valuable to all systematists, ecologists and students of evolution.

D. LEWIS

### World Without Want

By Paul G. Hoffman. Pp. 144+24 photographs. (London: Chatto and Windus, Ltd., 1963.) 22s. 6d. net.

WITHIN 150 pages, the man mainly responsible for the success of the Marshall Plan reduces the complexities and technicalities of technical assistance and the proposal for the World Development Decade to terms that the ordinary citizen can relate to his every-day life. The meaning and implications of the growing gap between the advanced and the backward peoples are made vividly manifest in terms of human existence which few, if any, can fail to understand. Merely as a piece of superb and accurate exposition it deserves to be noted by all scientists and technologists. However, the magnitude of Mr.