

Reviews

[Whaling in the Antarctic. By A. G. Bennett, R.A.O.U. Published by Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., Edinburgh and London, 1931. 220 pages, illustrated. Price, 7/6.]

Without doubt great advance has been made in the methods of whaling since the days that Hermann Melville writes of in recording the incidents of whaling experienced by Ahab's men in pursuit of Moby Dick. The day of the strong-armed harpooner has gone and the huge sea beasts are now speedily despatched by harpoons fired by special whaling guns. The establishment of whaling stations throughout the southern seas relieves the whalers of much of the arduous work necessary to gain from the slaughtered whales the products sought, leaving them free to indulge in further chase. The cost of whaling, however, is considerably increased under present conditions.

Of whales themselves, Mr. Bennett includes much of interest—notes concerning their senses of hearing and sight; the fact that internally whales have traces of hind-legs, telling the tale of their pedestrian ancestors; indications of 'routes' followed by whales, which are probably ancient tracks of earlier whales "through comparatively shallow waters on the fringe of land masses that have disappeared"; descriptions of the various kinds of 'leviathans,' including the savage killer whale, and an account of the vile-smelling ambergris that, strangely enough, is of great value in the manufacture of perfumery.

Several chapters deal with the bird-life of the Antarctic, which in point of numbers eclipses all other forms of life. Petrels and allied forms, and Penguins of several kinds, Albatrosses, Skuas, Sheathbills, and others abound. Many birds prey on the waste from the whaling factories, affording splendid opportunities for observation. Full notes are given on many of the rarer forms of sea-birds. The book concludes with the hope that indiscriminate slaughter and wanton waste will not continue. Mr. Bennett's work should appeal to members for its general interest.—C.E.B.

[Album of Abyssinian Birds and Mammals. From paintings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Special Publication of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, U.S.A. Price \$3.00, plus postage and delivery charges.]

The publication of this portfolio, a collection of 32 magnificent paintings made by the late Mr. Fuertes while a member of the "Field Museum-Chicago *Daily News* Abyssinian Expedition," of 1926-27, has been made possible largely by the generosity of Mr. C. Suydam Cutting, who purchased the original paintings and presented them to the Museum, and guaranteed the cost of publication. Interest-

ing facts regarding Mr. Fuertes's zeal and intense love of his subject are set out in a few pages of prefatory matter by Mr. Wilfred Osgood, Curator of Zoology of the Museum, issued with the volume.

The reproductions are of that quality that needs an artist to fully appreciate it. But Fuertes's work is well known, and perhaps an attempt to describe it is unnecessary, especially in view of the fact that Fuertes knew his subject so well, that his artistry was combined with such a vast amount of ornithological knowledge that he succeeded in producing work which almost transferred the living bird to his canvas. Many of the birds figured are those that are unlike anything occurring in Australia, such as certain Vultures and Plaintain Eaters, but in a Night Heron (*Nycticorax*) and several Kingfishers, birds approximating to Australian species, there are included forms that are "nearer home." Four plates of mammals complete an interesting collection.—C.E.B.

Obituaries

B. C. J. BETTINGTON.

Mr. B. C. J. Bettington, grazier, of Merriwa, New South Wales, died on August 27, 1931. He was 32 years of age. Born at Merriwa, Mr. Bettington was the elder son of Mr. J. H. Bettington, grazier, and owner of Terragong station. He received his early education at The King's School, and then proceeded to Oxford University with his only brother, Dr. R. H. Bettington. He secured a degree in engineering. About eight years ago he returned to Sydney, and took up the management of his father's station. Mr. Bettington had been a member of the R.A.O.U. since 1915. He wrote the article recording the birds observed near the R.A.O.U. Camp at Upper Williams River, N.S.W., in October, 1926—see *The Emu*, Vol. XXVI, page 188. He was a prominent golfer and cricketer in New South Wales.

J. A. HILL.

Mr. Joseph A. Hill, of Stawell, died on August 23, at the age of 76. He was one of the original members of the Union, and was well known to many of the older members, if not to the younger ones. He took part in several Union "camps out." As a field naturalist he was in touch with leading naturalists, both in Victoria and New South Wales, especially with workers in entomology and ornithology. He was also able to help botanists, particularly with the orchids of the Grampians and the Wimmera. He supplied a good