

chapters is not always organised so well as it might have been, nor is it free of errors, though most of them are trivial. A fascinating account of the discovery of the various species from the sixteenth century onwards says all that needs to be said about the hideous persecution of penguins in the early days. Here and elsewhere the authors point out that there is no cause for complacency about the future of penguins, even though no species is immediately in danger.

A final chapter gives notes on each of the 17 penguin species, each with a full-page illustration, by Robert Gillmor, in black and white, yellow and red, which gives almost the full range of colour needed. Other drawings by Robert Gillmor, in black, white and pale blue, are decorative, informative and of the high standard we expect of him, and a fine selection of photographs depicts nearly every species.

D. W. SNOW

**Birds of the Antarctic**, by **Edward Wilson**, edited by **Brian Roberts**. Blandford Press, 5 gns.

Every so often throughout history a man comes among us who appears nine feet tall. Whether it be through statesmanship, inventiveness, wisdom, courage or skill, such men's greatness is never compared but accepted with gratitude for having raised, each in his individual way, the standards of the human race. Edward Wilson was one of these. Exploration, especially into polar regions, has attracted many such men, scholarly and sensitive with a degree of determination and devotion that surmounts unspeakable hardship. On Captain Scott's fateful 'Terra Nova' expedition of 1910–12, Wilson was chief scientist and doctor – Dr Bill. He was also the expedition's cornucopia, dispensing harmony, affection, encouragement, confidence and wise counsel. But there seems little doubt that his own personal reward came from his work and, in particular, his drawing.

*Birds of the Antarctic* is something of a personal memorial, and Brian Roberts has edited it with a sympathy only possible in someone closely involved with the Antarctic, and with its fauna as closely as with its geography, administration and exploration. Through a common interest he has made it very much Wilson's book, with the finest selection of Wilson drawings ever assembled together, extracts from his diaries, and a précis of his life and work.

The drawings have an extraordinary integrity. Many were done under hopeless conditions and show unmistakable signs of a struggle but it is this dedication that gives them such value, for each one is an accurate record of fast moving reality. Wilson would have scorned the slick and superficial treatment that so often covers a lack of anatomical understanding. His subject was always master. One can sense a feeling of humility towards it as if accuracy were his way of paying homage to great wonders. His drawings are judged more by human standards than those of present day art. The facts of Wilson's life and work are history, but this chance to see the work of his hand and read his own field notes in his own writing, makes this quotation from Sir Charles Wright so easy to understand: 'We who knew him realised that though he kept himself as much in the background as possible, not a single man on the expedition, from Captain Scott down to myself, ever undertook any serious step without first asking Dr Bill's advice. . . . The best influence and the finest character I for one will ever meet.'

KEITH SHACKLETON

**The Mammals of Eastern Canada** by **Randolf L. Peterson**. Oxford University Press, 128s.

Ten years in the making, this richly illustrated reference book brings together more accurately than ever before information about the distribution, classification, life-history and ecology of the mammals of Eastern Canada. Combining