

those parts of Africa with which he is familiar, but he feels that for many, and particularly some of the larger, species of wild life, there is still a future. One hopefully echoes such sentiments.

C. R. S. P.

SNAKES. By H. W. PARKER. Robert Hale. 21s.

Several handbooks to the reptiles have appeared in recent years but this is the first to deal exclusively with the snakes and will, therefore, find a useful place on library bookshelves. It certainly contains much more information than any of the handbooks previously reviewed but, even so, a tremendously wide field has been covered and deciding what to include must have been a major headache for the author. Despite the compression, and the amount of information included, this is a very readable handbook as well as a source of facts.

With a handbook of this type it will always be possible to find fault on minor points and there would be no purpose in calling attention to any. Possibly it will be field workers who have most to criticize but, here again, about what is included and what is omitted rather than anything else.

It is the reviewer's personal opinion that advice on the treatment of snake bite is out of place in a biology text book. In view of the amount of controversy that seems to be going on in the medical world, especially about the "cut and suck" method, the reviewer feels that a biologist should not enter the discussion at all. This is purely a medical matter and, if intended for the general public, should find its proper place in first-aid manuals.

Having said all this the reviewer can only add "unreservedly recommended" for both amateur and professional zoologists, his only real criticism being that the book is rather austere produced. If for a few extra shillings a better production could have been made, they would have been well spent. After all, this is the kind of book that has to last through continual reference for a great many years.

J. I. M.

LIFE WITH IONIDES. By MARGARET LANE. Hamish Hamilton. 25s.

What a man! and one might echo "What a woman!" for Margaret Lane who travelled to Tanganyika to observe Ionides at his strange craft—snake-catching—inevitably found herself learning to catch and handle large, deadly species, as well as how to sex them alive. Where he has made his home dangerous snakes abound. For those for whom serpents exert a special fascination the vivid portrayal of the hazardous occupation of this remarkable character provides a wealth of exciting reading. Described as a romantic and singular personality, he is a peculiar combination of "authority and courtesy, ferocity and gentleness". His strikingly handsome profile is that of an aristocrat of a bygone age. A born naturalist and an enthusiastic conservationist, his knowledge of the lesser fauna is extensive. The facile way in which he catches large, deadly snakes—some exceptionally active—and his nonchalant demeanour, have given rise to stories that he is casual in operation, but in fact no one could be more careful. However, having been bitten on a number of occasions by a variety of poisonous species he has evidently developed a high degree of immunity.

In his self-imposed role of recluse Ionides has, apart from snakes, a hobby

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