

involuntary deception which occurred in the "Clever Hans" case. One limitation to Atlanta's learning ability seems to be her difficulty in taking an initial interest in the particular test set for her, and this was most marked in counting problems. It took the author a long time to get her arithmetic lessons going at all, but at the end of the book she could apparently count up to ten with fair accuracy.

Atlanta has become known to countless television viewers and this book will add to her admirers. It is thorough, but pleasantly and lightly written against the background of Dartmoor and some of its wild and human inhabitants, and well illustrated. Equally satisfying is it that Atlanta was still alive at the end of the book.

GRAHAM DES FORGES.

THE DESERT, by A. STARKER LEOPOLD; THE SEA, by LEONARD ENGEL; THE POLES, by WILLEY LEY; THE MOUNTAINS, by LORUS J. MILNE and MARGERY MILNE. *Life Nature Library*, Time-Life International. 32s. 6d. each.

These are the first four volumes of a series of nature books, each consisting of an introductory essay on the main heading, and subsidiary articles on some aspects of it, such as the animals and the plants of each environment. They are all interesting and superbly illustrated. The same author writes every essay in each book and the style is popular. Of course as the scope of each volume is so vast and its size comparatively small—190 pages including copious illustrations, bibliography, and index—the subjects can only be dealt with in a restricted way, but the treatment is not superficial in a derogatory sense. The final essays in each book deal with man's relationship to the particular environment, and these, together with the introductory essays, I found the most absorbing.

One can, of course, pick holes now and again. Page 147 of *The Sea*, for instance, says "the only walrus left roam a few remote areas of Greenland and the Arctic", which gives a wrong impression of the walrus populations and is in fact contradicted in *The Poles*, which gives the present-day walrus population as 70,000.

A brief description of the first volume will perhaps give a further idea of the scope of this series. In his introductory essay to *The Desert*, Dr. Starker Leopold explains what a desert really is and, with the aid of a map, briefly describes the main deserts of the world. Following a wonderful series of pictures of the Sahara, he writes about the creation of deserts, the people, animals and plants of deserts, on the eternal problem of water and on man's struggle against the desert environment. Finally, we read how, with the present enormous strides in technical achievement, desert lands are being brought into the service of mankind at an ever accelerating speed.

C. L. BOYLE.

SNAKES OF AFRICA. By R. I. ISEMONGER. Nelson. 21s.

Having had a special love for snakes ever since, when a schoolboy, I was bitten and nearly died through carelessly handling an adder, it was with pleasant anticipation that I opened Richard Isemonger's book. It is an odd fact that, sooner or later, every field herpetologist, no matter how experienced, must ruefully admit that he has been bitten by the very animal he loves, and the author is no exception. Yet like all devoted snake-men he exonerates the serpent from all blame, and continues with his dangerous pursuit. This is a book full of fascination and excitement spiced with humour