

But such errors will not detract from the enjoyment of this well written and lavishly produced book—a welcome addition to the many already published on Darwin and excelling many of them in literary style and general presentation.

M. P. HARRIS

**The Vanishing Jungle, by Guy Mountfort.** Collins. 63s.

This account of the author's two fact-finding expeditions to Pakistan to investigate the plight of its once abundant wildlife is a depressing though fascinating story. The losses of wildlife and primary vegetation are greater even than had been feared, the habitat destruction adversely affecting the ungulates and thus depriving carnivores of necessary food. An East Pakistan reserve of 800 square miles was progressively reduced, for various reasons, to a mere 172; everywhere poaching, poisoning and commercialisation of animal products inflicted gigantic losses. Lack of effective control was primarily responsible for this disastrous state of affairs. But the prospect now seems good that many of the animals brought to the verge of extinction will be saved, and that Pakistan's rich heritage is on the road to survival. It is gratifying that the author's wise recommendations to the Pakistan Government, based on the findings of his first tour, were immediately accepted: the Pakistan Wildlife Committee was established and properly guarded nature reserves created. On his second tour the author was able to see how determined the Pakistan Government is to safeguard its wild life.

The wide range of habitats examined included desert, Punjab Salt Range (where the reviewer found urial plentiful in 1913), high altitude mountains (the war deprived the reviewer of a projected visit to the Gilgit Agency in 1915), mangrove swamps of the Indus delta, the wet lands and rain forest of Sylhet, and the Sunderbans (in the Bay of Bengal), still, as in 1910, the haunt of a dangerous breed of man-eating tiger.

Both colour and black-and-white illustrations from Eric Hosking's superb photographs are, as is to be expected, singularly beautiful. Three valuable appendices list respectively mammals (with their distribution), reptiles and amphibians, and birds; a fourth, by Eric Hosking, advises on photography.

C. R. S. PITMAN

**The Antarctic, by H. G. R. King.** Blandford Press, 55s.

Many years of answering questions on the polar regions have inspired the author to compile this Antarctic vademecum to which the plain man can reliably turn for the basic facts. As Librarian and Information Officer of the Scott Polar Research Institute, he is certainly well placed to write a book of this kind for he has behind him not only the support of one of the world's most comprehensive polar libraries but also the counsel of a resident team of experts. This is not primarily a biological text; it comprises the nature of the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic, man's scientific activities in the region and a brief history of its exploration. Nevertheless, something like a third of the text is devoted to a description of the wildlife, and the author has properly laid stress on the fact that here is one of the few remaining areas of the Earth's surface where the native fauna and flora are still relatively free from man's interference. The ecological balance of Antarctica and its surrounding islands is an exceedingly fine one; whole animal and plant communities could easily be destroyed by human interference however unintentional. Two chapters devoted to seals and whales emphasise the almost complete extinction of the fur and elephant seals in the nineteenth century and