

Nature in the Round is indubitably valuable as a source book on a multitude of environmental topics, but to achieve the 'step towards the invention of environmental science' that is its aim would need a more conspicuous editorial presence. Judging from what is offered here, the foundation stones of this new science seem firm enough, but we still await the concrete to bind them together.

ALASTAIR FITTER

Cranes of the World, by Lawrence Walkinshaw. Winchester Press, New York, \$25.00.

'Monumental' is the apt adjective for this book—a monument to the fifteen surviving species of a family of birds which has decorated the earth for millions of years but whose existence is increasingly menaced by man; and equally a monument to the dedication and achievement of an amateur ornithologist in the truest sense of the term. Retiring from a dental practice only five years ago, he has amassed, in 370 pages, the results of over forty years' observations of wild and captive cranes, supported by intensive research in libraries and museums. This comprehensive array of information is enlivened by some fine descriptive writing, generous quotation, and 138 well-chosen photographs, ten of them in colour, and for the most part taken by the author himself on his extensive travels.

The plan of the book is simple: preface; introduction (summarising the characteristics of the family, and the classification of living and fossil species); the fifteen biographies set out under roughly comparable headings; 23 tables of miscellaneous data; an appendix listing the majority of plants and animals incidentally mentioned in the text (but unfortunately without page references); and a species by species bibliography. In general, there is something of interest for everyone and a conservation-minded reader will especially enjoy the story of the whooping crane and the piecing together of all that is known of the mysterious black-necked crane.

Perhaps inevitably, in a book of such ambitious scope, there are several defects in the organisation and appraisal of material, and rather too many misprints and minor errors. One must also deplore the haphazard and unnecessary use of alternative English names, which besides being confusing leads to some absurdities like 'dark-crowned' and 'gray-crowned' crane (for which reason the names 'dark crowned crane' and 'gray crowned crane' are surely best avoided!). But despite these blemishes, this is a book to which every gruiophile will undoubtedly turn for information and enjoyment for years to come.

HUGH F. I. ELLIOTT

New Zealand Insects and their Story, by Richard Sharell. Collins, £5.50.

As its title suggests, this is a popular account of entomology as illustrated by the New Zealand insect fauna. The first chapter describes, in words and pictures, the life history of the praying mantis. Thereafter the book follows an orthodox pattern with chapters on butterflies and moths, beetles and bugs, and other groups of insects. The style is enthusiastic without being too gushing, and, although much of the descriptive material will be of interest primarily to those living in New Zealand, most entomologists and naturalists should find the book enjoyable and informative. A chapter on the origin and evolution of insects does not differentiate sufficiently between modern groups of animals and the ancestral ones from which they are probably descended, but it is a readable and lively account of the subject. One of the most enjoyable chapters is the biographical sketch of the pioneer New Zealand entomologist G. V. Hudson. The much slighter account of Fabre which accompanies it is not relevant to the book's theme.