

The Appalachians are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world, the 500-million-year-old, worn-down stumps of what may once have been a majestic range of peaks stretching from the St. Lawrence southwards into Georgia. In at least two places, the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the Great Smokies of Tennessee, they do look like the popular conception of mountains; in between their summits are more modest. Their natural history has three special features: a remarkable variety of deciduous trees, of salamanders and of wood warblers (the North American family Parulidae). This book should interest even those who do not know, and have no prospect of visiting the Appalachians.

RICHARD FITTER.

Origins of American Conservation, by Henry Clepper. Ronald Press, New York, \$4.50.

This is another of the modest books of reference edited by Henry Clepper for the Natural Resources Council of America. One could say there is nothing new in this book, but there is no other publication which has gathered together the inspiring collection to be found here. Twelve authors have written essays on the origins of American conservation in the several fields of wildlife, forests, soil, fisheries, water, range, national parks, wilderness and scenery. Throughout we see, in a country where exploitation of a bountiful heritage of natural resources has been of the greediest and most squandering, that a few men of good will and great courage and persistence have managed to turn the public attitude towards conservation. Marsh, Olmsted, Muir, Roosevelt, Pinchot, Mather and some brave politicians who acted like statesmen: it is an amazing story which we in Britain should know and understand better. Individualistic and anti-social efforts to grab what is left are not yet dead, but the public and official attitude is firm. Each of the fields of natural resources mentioned above had its own battles to fight, but the tendency now is to see how closely the fields are related, and conservation effort today is closely co-ordinated.

F. FRASER DARLING.

Tomorrow's Countryside : The Road to the Seventies, by Garth Christian. John Murray, 35s.

The future of our countryside, as HRH the Duke of Edinburgh says in his foreword to this book, is one of the most urgent and difficult problems that must be faced to-day. Conservation has moved far away from the ideas of forty years ago, when the CPRE and the first of the county naturalists' trusts were formed and country-lovers were primarily concerned with preserving attractive scenery and protecting rare plants, butterflies and birds. To-day conservation is more an attitude of mind that sees man's very survival as dependent on the wisdom and restraint with which he uses the earth's natural biological resources to provide a suitable habitat for himself.

Yet the old meaning is still widely prevalent, and Mr Christian sees the source of the trouble as the fragmentation of modern life, whereby various interests remain indifferent to important national issues considered to be outside their own province. The tragedy is, as he says, that "to a hard-working clerk at County Hall, nature conservation may appear to be no more than the hobby or pastime of a minority, like basketball or bowls."

This book should be compulsory reading for all such hard-working clerks and for everyone who cares or should care for the countryside and, indeed, man's survival. It presents an impressive amount of factual information, in a pleasing style, about all the pressures on the land of Britain resulting from the increasing size and prosperity of the population and the development of science and technology in agriculture, industry and transport. There is an outstanding series of apposite photographs, a comprehensive bibliography and an excellent index.