

Mammals. His was the pioneer task of creating an effective medical service for the animals in the Society's collection, including the design and equipment of a modern hospital; this he successfully accomplished in the face of considerable difficulties. On the professional side there were also novel problems, particularly in working out techniques for producing anaesthesia in species of all sizes and with widely different types of reaction; and always, of course, it was first necessary to catch his tiger – some hair-raising incidents are vividly recounted. The author writes with notable sensitivity about the animals that were his patients, emphasising the need for shielding them from emotional stress and the fundamental psychological difference between wild animals under restraint and domesticated species with an inherent orientation to man.

A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON

**Animals of Bible Lands, by G. S. Cansdale. Paternoster Press, £2.50**

Written primarily for the Bible student interested in natural history, this fascinating book attempts throughout to relate Biblical texts to modern knowledge of the Palestine fauna – 'animal' is used in its widest sense, embracing vertebrates and invertebrates alike. It seeks also to make precise identifications of the many Hebrew animal names found in Bible texts. It is hardly surprising that the translators here encountered many difficulties, but in some cases they clearly did not consult the works of those scholar-naturalists best qualified to help. Thus it is astonishing to read that the Hebrew name 'Shaphan' is still being variously translated as 'coney', or even as 'badger' or 'rock badger'. As long ago as 1866 Canon Tristram, aptly described as 'the father of natural history in Palestine', indicated that this name, meaning literally 'the hider', was correctly applied to that unique little mammal, the hyrax. Again, Tristram clearly indicated that the Hebrew name 'kippod' (qippod) meant the hedgehog; it was often, understandably, misapplied to the porcupine, but there seems little excuse for the erroneous translation 'bittern' Zeph. 2:14: 'The bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels' (of Nineveh). This was doubtless a prophetic utterance, alluding to the desolation and burial of Nineveh beneath the soil, when the humble hedgehog could indeed have lodged in its upper lintels! No doubt it did fulfil this prophecy, since *Hemiechinus* at least is known to construct a burrow.

This erudite book, well illustrated and full of interest for naturalist and bible student alike, is first class value, and stimulating reading for anyone with these interests contemplating a visit to the Holy Land.

DAVID HARRISON

**The Shell Natural History of Britain, edited by Maurice Burton. Michael Joseph, £2.50.**

At a time when the term 'natural history' is spoken of condescendingly, if not actually derisively by some younger biologists (and when its entry in one modern dictionary can be followed by 'archaic' – it is good to find a sponsor and publishers issuing a book with this title and an editor, and a professional scientist at that, so completely uninhibited in his use of the words in his introductory chapter. For the truth is that whereas the older, often anecdotal form of natural history has undoubtedly fallen into a well-earned decline, a newer, more precise study of living things in the wild was never more needed than at the