

personal experience. It is skilfully written, with a refreshing avoidance of the clichés that can so easily mar such a work.

Even the professional mammalogist will be continuously intrigued by the amount of little-known but highly significant information, all backed up by discreet reference to a copious bibliography. There is a description of how black rhinos use their horns to snap off thick branches of *Euphorbia* trees; of cooperation in hunting between a jackal and a cheetah; of recent work on grazing successions in the Serengeti Plains; and of the remarkable air-sacs and voice of the walrus. Some of the less credible, but frequently repeated, tales of mammalian prowess are given critical attention and put in proper perspective.

G. B. CORBET

**The Natural History of an English Forest**, by Norman E. Hickin. Hutchinson, £3.

**Charm of the Cheviots**, by Henry Tegner. Frank Graham, £2.10.

**A Naturalist on Speyside**, by Henry Tegner. Geoffrey Bles, £1.75.

The English forest of which Dr. Hickin writes is Wyre, which although only some 20 miles from the centre of Birmingham still retains almost 3,000 acres of its original 'old oak'. Systematically, group by group, he describes and illustrates in accurate drawings the forest's wildlife which has drawn him back over the past 50 years whenever he could get away from professional duties in the south. Wyre Forest has a quite remarkable flora and fauna, and Dr. Hickin's account becomes almost a synopsis of British natural history. But it is no mere catalogue; many fascinating byways are explored, and the author's enthusiasm is so infectious that, at the end, this reviewer felt that he had been privileged to take part in a conducted natural history excursion in which fifty years had magically been compressed into a single afternoon.

Whereas Dr. Hickin writes as a field naturalist, Mr. Tegner's inclinations are towards field sports which occasionally lead to some apparent inconsistencies. Thus we read, 'I have never met a fox-hunter who does not love Charles James the Fox, pungent beast that he is'. Again, on otters, 'An angling association had the rights to fish for several miles on both banks. The voluntary wardens saw to it that otters could not exist on the association's waters. Elimination was almost inevitable. This was the usual state of affairs on nearly all waters not frequented by the otter hunters. For once again it was the man who was the hunter who was the preserver . . . The otter would seem to be undergoing some process of population decline; and yet there has been no particular attempt to artificially de-populate the species . . . No one really knows as yet why otters appear to be scarcer.'

Like Dr. Hickin Mr. Tegner draws on 50 years experience of the wild fauna of his beloved area and he includes interesting accounts of the feral goats and the famous Chillingham white cattle also. The illustrations include, appropriately, reproductions of some of Thomas Bewick's wood-cuts.

In *A Naturalist on Speyside* Mr. Tegner displays a considerable knowledge also of another classic area for naturalists. Red deer and roe, reindeer, feral goats, blue hares, wild cats, foxes, golden eagles and the famous ospreys all provide interesting chapters, and he describes the impact of tourism and its effects on one who knew Cairn Gorm in its peaceful days. The book contains many photographic illustrations.

JOHN CLEGG