

REVIEWS

THE HILL OF LIGHT. G. D. ADAMS. Constable and Co. 12s. 6d.

This is a story book, the story of the mammals and birds of a Welsh hillside. It glances at the human inhabitants, too, but only when they break into the cycle of animal life, usually to the disadvantage of the animal.

The story is centred on Grey the badger, but the life-histories of Fang the fox, Mulo the buzzard, and many other wild creatures are well portrayed. The thoughts of men are translated into the minds of animals, but not too much so for a book of this kind. There is no attempt at happy endings, but the book is not overloaded with tragedy, and utter disaster does not befall any of the creatures which have especially gained our sympathy. The only illustration is an excellent picture of a badger.

I would recommend this book to a boy or girl of 12 to 15, for which range of age it is presumably intended. Although it is not free from inaccuracies—for instance a great grey shrike is described as rather larger than a jay—it should serve to arouse any latent interest in natural history.

C. L. B.

THE ANCIENT WHITE CATTLE OF BRITAIN AND THEIR DESCENDANTS. G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD. Faber and Faber, Ltd. 68s.

Mr. Whitehead's book supersedes Storer's *Wild White Cattle of Great Britain*, published in 1877, which is seriously out of date. He enumerates as many as 97 herds, gives descriptions of all of them, though particularly of those of Chillingham, Cadzow, Chartley, Vaynol and Dynevor. These are precisely the ones of particular interest from the point of view of fauna preservation, for some have been claimed to be more or less direct descendants of the wild ancestor of all cattle, the aurochs (*Bos primigenius* Boj.).

The possible origins of white cattle and their relations with the aurochs are summarized mainly from the existing literature. In weighing the evidence for a direct descent from the aurochs on the one hand and for a deviation from Roman cattle or similar continental stock, the author inclines towards the latter alternative. In this respect it is to be regretted that the bibliography does not contain a single reference to a continental publication on the origin of cattle. The back-breeding experiments of the brothers Heck, however, are discussed.