

A Nordic Nimrod

THERE is no royal road to exploring. This conclusion we read between the lines of Prince William of Sweden's narrative, *AMONG PYGMIES AND GORILLAS* (Dutton, \$6.00), being an intimate account of the trials and triumphs of the Swedish Zoological Expedition into Central Africa in 1921. No less than fourteen specimens of the newly discovered mountain gorilla, — two from each of seven volcanic peaks, — were brought out, in addition to other large scientific collections. The book is of special interest just now after the Prince has been in America lecturing on his exploits.

The sturdy adventures described by Prince William took place in innermost Africa in a mysterious rift valley containing in its very central portion Lake Kivu and Lake Edward. This region, which Prince William describes with fine appreciation of beauties and catastrophic horrors, seems a veritable workshop of worlds, a place of frost and flame, where dead, waterless plains of lava alternate with exuberant rain forests. There are the picturesque negro tribes of the more open stretches of Uganda, and on the volcanic slopes overwhelmed with rank vegetation the mountain gorilla has his home. In this same forbidding and fascinating territory are the hidden lairs of little black humans, — the pygmies.

In America we know something of the mountain gorilla as a result of the labors of the late Carl E. Akeley in the same region worked by the Swedish Expedition a year or two earlier. This gorilla, believed to be specifically distinct from the gorilla of West Africa, first described by Du Chaillu, is by all counts a superb beast. The chance that this backwoods cousin of man has evolved in different physical varieties on the separate cones of the Birunga range seems slight, but he may have variable habits of life. Perhaps his cries have differentiated, or his food, or his manner of making a lair.

Prince William gives us much more than a log of big game hunters. He sketches the drama of man engaged in a struggle with forces of environment which may well be called titanic. He discusses colonization, the deleterious effects of the fierce war for the possession of German

East Africa where white men were arrayed against each other to the disillusion of the blacks, and the portentous future of the country under Belgian and English rule. There are also pictures and observations of ethnological interest concerning the Wambutti, Babira, and other tribes. From cover to cover, the book is vivid, virile, and vivacious.

HERBERT J. SPINDEN

The Mystery of Childhood

THE mind of the child has in recent years been subjected to respectable scientific exploration. Modern psychologists, — Behaviorists and Freudians alike, — look to the mental processes of the infant to find the seeds of those impulses and fears which dominate the adult world. The more rationalistic activities of the child's mind have received less devoted attention than his emotional reactions, although some facts have come to be accepted without severe experimentation. The infant mind, we have learned, is not merely a simple and inadequate replica of the adult mind. It presents an intricate pattern of a different order. It functions by processes and with results of its own. The adult mind is geared to the objective world and to the world of abstract thought, the child's mind is geared more largely to his subjective world and only begins to shift as his contacts with reality make more impression upon him.

Children we have always with us, but the significance of their babblings is commonly lost upon grown-ups. As we grope for it with adult standards of rationality, it either makes sense to us or is dismissed as nonsense. The true subjective meaning is concealed in the darkness of a mind which cannot describe its processes. Thus, with all the evidence abundantly at hand, the thinking of children has never been adequately studied by experimental methods.

An impressive start in that direction has been made by Jean Piaget of the Institut J. J. Rousseau at Geneva. In *THE LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT OF THE CHILD* (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.75), M. Piaget subjects the theories of psychologists to ingenious and carefully controlled tests. In his laboratory at the Institut children move about with complete free-

dom and talk to one another as they please. The observer records, and then analyzes, all the remarks of two children for several months. This material is checked and corroborated by observations with other children and by a number of set tests.

Thus M. Piaget finds that between the ages of six and seven nearly half of the verbal expression of these children is egocentric. Even when they talk directly to one another, each is wrapped in the solitude of his own being. The young child is essentially a monologist, with himself as audience. His conversation is frequently fantastic and unreal; seldom is it designed to transmit information. At about the age of seven a change takes place in his thought and language. He shifts his attention from his nebulous inner world to the world outside. He awakens to the objective existence of things and ideas which before were hardly more than projections of himself. The change is not sudden, but it is clear enough to be marked and recorded. The child begins to establish a direct relationship with impersonal facts and meanings. His questions are now the expression of intelligent curiosity. His egocentric world dissolves.

With M. Piaget as guide, the same method of investigation could readily be followed in other modern nursery schools, where similar, if less comprehensive, records have frequently been taken. It would be interesting to compare these results with those of M. Piaget, and more interesting still to apply them to modern educational method. In the old days, when children's minds were considered as clay to be molded or cups to be filled, the teaching process was chiefly one of prodding or ladling. The doom of the forcible-feeding theory was sounded when the first kindergarten was founded. It has been made more certain with every experimental school that has opened its doors. The new education follows the child, instead of driving the child before it. Such insight as M. Piaget's study offers into the mental characteristics of various age groups should be very valuable in suggesting methods to be used and the ages at which materials or subjects should be introduced.

FREDA KIRCHWEY

Second Aid to Clippers

NO scissors being at hand, I gouged out the poem untidily with a pin, and then wondered what I'd do with it, and what I had done with other clipped gems from F. P. A.'s Conning Tower column. There's something so limply helpless about a clipping. After a moment's hesitation I slipped it into a book, and tried to pretend I didn't know it for lost.

And then what should turn up but **THE SECOND CONNING TOWER BOOK!** Here, I discovered, was the heaven where good clippings went. Here, among others, were Dorothy Parker and Elspeth and Ethel M. Kelly and M. A. and Rufus Terral. Here, too, was as happy and modest a dedication as was ever inscribed by a man to his wife: "To Esther, Contributor of Anthony to the 1926 'World'." Not knowing Anthony, I deemed F. P. A. himself the arch contrib, — having given this book to the 1927 "World", — and I thought gaily how I could eschew scissors and pin hereafter, for surely he would contribute another to the 1928 "World", and so on, long life to him!

But as I reread with delight this poem and that, a great emptiness began to assail me. It persisted until and after I discovered the reason: the writings of Emanuel Eisenberg had come up missing! How now, Mr. Pepys! Surely no one writes better poetry for you! There were other aching voids, too, which I couldn't just put name to. But after all, one hundred and ninety-two well printed pages teem with poetry, ranging from the amusing to the beautiful; and what more could one ask of Macy-Masius, the publishers, for \$2.00?

Indeed, the publishers add a pretty little bleat of their own, ironically appropriate to The Conning Tower, — a who's who note, succinctly succulent, on the manufacture of the book. The page rules, — straight lines a little fatter in their middles than at their ends, — are "used ornamentally" (sic), we are told, "for one of the first times in a book." They don't say who designed the punctuation points. If this note had appeared in somebody else's book, I think F. P. A. would have made great sport of it in his colyum.

VIOLA PARADISE