



HYRAX, OR CONEY. Drawing by Ivan T. Sanderson, from "Animal Treasure."

## Incredible Nature

*ANIMAL TREASURE.* By Ivan T. Sanderson. New York: The Viking Press. 1937. \$3.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

IT IS certainly not because of any competence in exotic natural history, or in the British Cameroons, for which exotic is too mild a word, that I undertake to review this book. But rather—since Mr. Sanderson's reliability as a scientific investigator is established—because the adventurousness, the humor, the easy narrative of his extraordinary experiences might be overlooked by a zoölogist too excited by the discoveries of new forms of life to note the literary quality of this book.

A little fed up with the dead measurements of his science (he agrees with Thoreau that to *look at* and to *see* an animal are not always the same), Mr. Sanderson, having acquired knowledge and scientific method, went off on an expedition of his own. He chose one of the wildest and unhealthiest parts of Africa, where the savage assemblies syncopated his jazz records with their own drums, where bats were as large as eagles, hollow trees were museums of new varieties of life, and where the frog, I should say, had reached the peak of his evolution. No one who reads this book will ever forget the frogs of every color and eccentricity, or think that nature has shown him all her cards in warm-blooded wild life. And spiders as big as a cheek that jump six feet at you—and leopards leaving their scent on tree pathways a hundred feet above the ground where the author at night, with an electric torch in his mouth, is following unnamed creatures amidst excited monkeys, sometimes grasping a snake instead of a branch—and dead melancholy gorillas—

and unknown water monsters bearing spears full of a powder that fizzes like bromo-seltzer.

I do not know why this book is more fascinating than any naturalist's exploration book I have read, unless it be that Mr. Sanderson was not looking for elephants, or antelope, or lions, or any of the big "beef" (everything is good "beef" or bad "beef" in the Cameroons) that big-game hunters write about. He was looking for life—the smaller, the less known, the less obvious the better. And in that lush heat life sprouted everywhere, gave away its secrets, exhibited its eccentricities, displayed its strange lusts for both ugliness and beauty. And also, because while he was searching for certain rare phenomena which would help scientists to solve certain problems they had isolated, his own interest was in behavior. He took as much pains to learn how an animal ran, fed, loved, looked in its native condition, as to find out what was its name and its place in the evolutionary scale. It was this study of behavior which kept him in a series of adventures, some of which will raise the down upon sedentary readers' spines.

There seems, indeed, to be a thesis behind this book. The classificationists have come near to the end of their usefulness. Although Mr. Sanderson was working for them, it is clear that his book is the record of a mind that sees unlimited areas of ignorance surrounding animals alive and uncaptured, not dead or immobilized. He does not think that even yet we know much about wild nature away from man's controls. And it is this pioneer quality in an imagination disciplined by orthodox science that gives to "Animal Treasure" its humor, its zest, and its constant intimations of a new world of living that is even more exciting than Africa.

## Doctor's Dilemma

*THE CITADEL.* By A. J. Cronin. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

FOR the theme of this, his fourth novel, Dr. Cronin has drawn on his experiences in the study and practice of medicine and has given us a vivid portrait of an intelligent, hard-headed young physician struggling to gain a foothold in his profession. A theme hardly unusual enough to cause the British medical lions to rear on their hind legs as they did and yelp a passionate protest. The crux of the matter lies of course in the fact that the author in its telling committed the unpardonable offense of dragging from the medical fraternity's closet its own privately sequestered skeletons. Behavior hardly "cricket," to say the least, from one who is himself an admitted disciple of Esculapius!

Andrew Manson comes straight from his lecture rooms and textbooks to a mining community in South Wales to act as medical assistant to a paralyzed doctor employed by the mine owners. His post soon becomes unendurable, but it nevertheless brings into his life two persons destined to have a lasting influence on his fate—the gallant little Chris, whom he marries; and the sardonic, disillusioned Denny, with whom he criminally but safely dynamites the town's typhoid-laden sewer when pleas prove unavailing. He advances to a larger mining community and to a broader field of work. Soon he is hot on the scent of an exciting research into the lung diseases of miners. As was the case in his first position, he is frustrated again and again by the jealousies, indifference, and supineness of both his young associates and his superiors, and his impotent rages serve merely to arouse their antagonistic resistance. Eventually, he leaves the mines for a paid position with the Coal and Metalliferous Miners' Fatigue Board. Now at last he thinks his opportunity has come, his research assured. There is rich satire in Cronin's account of the Board and its officers, and of the meeting wherein Andrew's proposals are respectfully but firmly shelved in the interests of bandage surveys. Andrew needs money, so he swallows his chagrin; and buoyed up somewhat by the irrepressible laboratory worker, Hope, devotes himself to bandages until he has accumulated enough to start at last on his own in London.

Repeated discouragements—all so futilely unnecessary—have dulled some of Andrew's freshness and faith, and now when he is thrown with private practitioners whose suavities and personal charm have proven far more potent promotional factors than his painfully acquired knowledge and skill, all magic

departs from his own altars and he decides to be "practical" with them. The remainder of the tale is concerned with the tragedy and the friends through whom he recovers his integrity.

The conflict between medical honesty and a competitive society is only the primary theme of this novel. Its secondary and "feminine" theme is that of married love. To the love story of Andrew and Chris the author has brought the extraordinary understanding of women's psychology to which his earlier novels have testified. Level-headed, clear-seeing Chris has as much steel in her backbone as has Andrew. Hard work and poverty have no terrors for her. The passionate integrity he brings to his science she brings to human relations—above all to her man. From him she will accept no compromise of principles, not even when love itself is at stake. They love, squabble, and make up with refreshing realism, always aware, as is the reader, of the reality of the spiritual and physical support each gives the other.

Like the author's previous novels, "The Citadel" has a satisfying solid and three-dimensional quality. "I keep telling myself never to take anything for granted," says Andrew of his medical code—which, one feels, may well be Cronin's own, and account in part at least for the structural solidity that distinguishes all his work. But it is its content rather than its literary excellence that has aroused controversy in England. Is it indeed a fair picture of the medical profession? Many American readers will no doubt object that the canvas has too much shadow, that while all in the know must have met in professional experience the counterpart of every one of Cronin's silly, ignorant, and money-loving physicians, there exists a far larger proportion than the novel suggests whose skill and integrity merit respect and trust. Cronin of course would be the last to deny this, but for his special ends he has chosen to take these for granted. What he has set out to do—and has done admirably—is to cut through the romanticism that still surrounds the medical profession, and boldly expose the potentialities of charlatanism and dishonesty inherent in a system whereby a large group of men must depend for economic security on the real or fancied suffering of others. And what he has to say about this situation applies not alone to England, but to the world over.

To American doctors the novel's main interest may well lie in the differences in methods of medical procedure in the two countries. Among them it will undoubtedly arouse conflicting opinions. But all who enjoy a good novel for its own sake will find it an engrossing, finely written story that needs no justification whatever.

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# Mirror of Literary Paris

THE GONCOURT JOURNALS. (1851-1870). By Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. (Translated and Edited by Lewis Galantière.) New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1937. \$3.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

ANGLLO-SAXON sympathy for the literary activity of other nations has slackened noticeably in recent decades—perhaps not without reason in the case of France, where writing seems to have become a decidedly hermetic art of late. But it is indeed surprising that no complete version of the celebrated diary kept in the middle of the last century by the inseparable brothers Goncourt should have appeared in English. The Goncourts were triple-threat writers of a sort unimaginable today: as dilettante essayists they introduced Japanese art to France and helped establish there the still prevalent fashion for the "delicious" eighteenth century; as novelists they were, surprisingly, pioneers in the realistic movement; as memorialists they were a vital link in the

chain that begins with Mme. de Sévigné and Saint-Simon, culminating in spirit if not in form with great and incorrigibly rambling work of Marcel Proust.

Today the Goncourts are enshrined in the hearts of their country's literary men primarily as the founders of an Academy and a Prize which has brought into brief prominence a number of novels good and bad, most of which have been translated into English with dismal results; but for many reasons the voluminous journal remains the most living of their works. The two authors originally decreed that it was not to be published until a generation after both of them were dead. However, the surviving brother was persuaded (with no great difficulty, one gathers) to give a cut and expurgated version to the public in 1887. After years of litigation and much controversy about its allegedly scandalous nature, the rest of the diary has yet to see the light of day, though Edmond has been dead for forty years.

We have no close equivalent in English for the Goncourt collaboration or its most important fruit, the journal. Arnold Bennett attempted something of the sort, but it is difficult to think of that successful

business-man of letters as a rival of these sensitive Frenchmen, self-characterized as "emotional, nervous, unhealthily impressionable creatures." Anatole France remarked that their journal was at once an intimate daily record and a carefully calculated piece of writing. As with Proust, their pose of excessive sensibility grew into a career and eventually permeated their work. Whatever one may think of the pose or of the once overpraised "artistic" style, their cross-section of Second Empire Paris is inimitable. In externals it sometimes takes on a quaint flavor nowadays, as when the Goncourts bewail the frightful Americanization of Paris—this in 1867 when we had barely raised our heads from the nightmare of civil war! But where the brothers are

really unrivaled is in their first-hand descriptions of the literary giants of the day. They met Hugo and Balzac; Flaubert, Daudet, Gauthier, Renan they knew well; Zola was their disciple. Deliberately they tried to set down for us the undiluted essence of each man's personality and talk, bringing them to life as they never did the characters of their own novels. There is no



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better mirror, in memoirs or letters, of the still vibrant activity of the period, so creative in spite of the third Napoleon.

Mr. Galantière's role in presenting this new edition of selections from the famous journal is an unusually weighty one. He has not only made a new translation, but provides many notes and adds an elaborate biographical repertory of the personages mentioned in the diary. While these contributions are neither dull enough nor accurate enough to be labeled scholarly, they are enlivening and necessary if this generation is to understand the Goncourts and their era. But why not publish the complete text? Almost as much of the journal and more about the Goncourts was given us as long ago as 1895 in the excellent if now somewhat old fashioned life of the brothers written by Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes and M. Shedlock. Perhaps Mr. Galantière's enthusiasm for the book and the period will prove contagious, and when the final installment of the *chronique scandaleuse* appears in France we may at last enjoy what they call over there an "integral" edition of this indispensable work.