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PUSSY CATS

Engato. By J. H. DRIBERG. *Routledge.* 3s. 6d.

Lions, Wild and Friendly. By E. F. V. WELLS. *Cassell.* 8s. 6d.

The Jungle in Sunlight and Shadow. By F. W. CHAMPION. *Chatto and Windus.* 21s.

The authors of these three books have a common purpose: they are concerned for the defence of wild beasts, Mr. Driberg and Mr. Wells for the lion, Mr. Champion for the animals of the Indian jungle in general and for the tiger in particular. Mr. Driberg has presented his case in a story, a tragi-comedy, with Engato, a lion-cub, as the hero. Mr. Wells has presented his in the form of a series of reminiscent essays, intelligent and charming, based upon years of experience with countless wild and tamed lions, backing it all up with many photographs that are both impressive and beautiful. The evidence in the case for the lion is brief, and, in the true sense of the word, witty. Mr. Champion, for the tiger and the rest of the jungle criminals, is less brief and witty, but more pugnacious and forceful. Mr. Driberg and Mr. Wells will charm the jury, convincing them with a truth that is not only beautiful, but also comic. Mr. Champion will not only impress the jury, which is really the public, but will also upset them by his sincerely aggressive and provocative methods and evidence. There is no doubt that after the case is over many furious gentlemen with experience of Indian life, of which they retain collections of tiger and leopard skins as pleasant memories, will write to the press and Mr. Champion deriding him as a fool and a sentimentalist, just as a great many big-game hunters will scorn as fairy tales the stories of tame lions behaving like spinsters' cats, giving bloodthirsty chapters and verse from their own hunting experiences in order to re-establish the lion, which is after all the British national emblem, as the holy terror all sportsmen know him to be.

Engato, indeed, is almost a fairy tale, and Mr. Driberg, though deprecating it, has appropriately dedicated the book to a child. It would have been still more appropriate if he had dedicated it to all children, and he could ask for no greater honour than that his book should take a permanent place on the shelves of all nurseries. *Engato* is simply the story of the finding of the lion-cub, "so small that it could lie comfortably in the palm of my hand"; its upbringing, suckled on goat's milk taken from the teat, the development of its silly, amiable, charming, affectionate character, and its final surrender to the zoological curator who prepared to defend his life with a ruler on seeing it led into his office like a pet dog. This is the mere outline of *Engato*; but behind it all lies the eternal story of man's affection for the wild creature he has tamed and reared with his own hand and the equally eternal but perhaps even more touching story of the tamed animal's affection for man. "I almost wished that day," says Mr. Driberg, as he surrendered Engato, "that I had never found him." The words are touching, but the look in Engato's eyes will not bear analysis. *Engato* is something more than a mere "animal book"; and as a writer Mr. Driberg hardly needs an introduction to readers of this paper.

In *Lions, Wild and Friendly*, Mr. Wells really tells the story of Engato over and over again. It has been his hobby for some years to do purposely what Mr. Driberg did by chance: to take lion-cubs from the wild and rear them by hand. If there were any doubt about the truth of *Engato* it would be dispelled by Mr. Wells' book. Page by page the two authors check and confirm each other's experiences. Once a "sportsman," Mr. Wells has long since sacrificed the gun for the camera, and the reader will see for himself the profits by the exchange in the thirty-odd close-ups of lions, both wild and tame, young and old, that Mr. Wells has slipped in between his stories. The book has perhaps a more direct purpose than *Engato*. One is inclined at moments to regard Engato as an exception, a freak, a bit of an angel among lions, but Mr. Wells produces cub after cub that has behaved with him exactly as Engato behaved with Mr. Driberg. His experiences with wild lions are more impressive still. He records that "wishing to make a big lion stand up, I gave him a flick on the nose with the black paper off the film pack. His complete indifference was amusing; he merely shook his head, looked around and took no further notice." Indeed, as one reads, the impression increases that Daniel gained an easy immortality. Mr. Wells puts the case for the lion in clear and unaffected prose, charming one into sympathy. It would be almost an insult to him not to read his book side by side with *Engato*.

Mr. Champion, appropriately named, strides into court with a

downright and uncompromising attitude which may very well set the jury against him, and plunges straight into the case without humbug.

"This book is neither a treatise on big-game hunting; nor a work after the style of the unwritten masterpiece . . . 'Our Dumb Friends—How to Kill, Skin, and Stuff Them'; nor an attempt to give a genuine picture of life in the jungle as it really is—eager, happy, contented throbbing life, with but occasional moments of passing fear and unhappiness. It is a reply to those sportsmen, authors, film-makers and others who will persist in referring to the supposed 'terrors' of the jungle."

This, though in more forceful language, is precisely the gist of Mr. Wells' book; and Mr. Champion sets out to do not only for the tiger but for the leopard and a dozen other creatures what Mr. Wells and Mr. Driberg have done for the lion. He writes exactly like an irate and impassioned defending counsel. His facts, the result of years of experience as officer of the Imperial Forest Service of India, are overwhelming; the very titles of his chapters are rhetorical challenges thrown into the face of "the self-styled lord of creation, *Homo sapiens*." He writes in that blunt, crude, passionately sincere style with which Hudson used to express his most righteous indignation. The extent of his knowledge and love of wild life is boundless. But the most remarkable feature of his book is its photographs. The tiger, the leopard, the ratel, the pangolin, the wild-cat, the elephant, appear here in all their native glory; they have even, at times, taken their own portraits, victims of Mr. Champion's ingenious automatic camera-trap. These alone would make the book worth-while; but the text must delight all those who in turn delight in the study of wild things.

H. E. BATES

THE DIARY OF AN OBSCURE PERSON

Julia Newberry's Diary. With an Introduction by CLEMENCE DANE. *Selwyn and Blount.* 6s.

Diaries are interesting either on account of the subjects with which they deal or because of the disclosure by style and method of the personality of the author. On the whole the diaries of obscure people are better reading than the diaries of celebrities because they are more natural and spontaneous and written without a thought of publication. Julia Newberry was the daughter of rich Chicago parents, and the diary she kept in a morocco bound locked book between 1869 and 1872, when she was between fifteen and seventeen, has only recently been discovered, broken open and published. Although only a fragment it is sufficient to give an extraordinarily vivid portrait of an attractive girl of shrewd intelligence and sparkling humour. Her method is not that of the punctual daily writer. She sums up periods and selects incidents which she considers worth recording, chiefly consisting of the advances of various young men, referred to as "snips," whom she describes with great perspicacity. Her method and, indeed, her character are disclosed in her criticism of another girl's journal which she regards as a contrast to her own.

Her language appears to me too studied, and her words are the longest she can find. She had evidently a great deal of book-knowledge, but seems lacking in what girls almost always possess, namely, fun, humour, sarcasm and enthusiasm.

Julia bubbles over whenever she had a chance, but she never hesitates to say when she was "frightfully bored," or even when she was "a little bored," because "they were so oppressively amiable." The numerous thumb-nail sketches of the "snips" are excellent. One "looks horrid, just like the Prince of Wales"; another "is so effeminate and such a flatterer that I just despise him, with his red shirts and green neckties, for he does dress like a perfect fiend"; and her favourite of them all "never paid compliments but he *did* complimentary things." Elderly men attracted her and were obviously attracted by her. She describes General Sheridan as "distinguishé, but frightfully ugly (perhaps not frightfully but still anything but handsome)," and Jerome Bonaparte paid great attention to her and told her the inner story of the Charge of the Light Brigade. But amid the purely frivolous records of dances, flirtations and clothes there are the criticisms and moralising of a more mature mind. Music was her special delight and she explains at some length how mere brilliant execution does not move her; to hear someone "dash off a stunning piece all scales, octaves, trills, chords, lightning and thunder"