

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER. By R. T. GOULD. Geoffrey Bles, 1934. (Out of print.)

MORE THAN A LEGEND. By CONSTANCE WHYTE. Hamish Hamilton, 1961. 21s.

LOCH NESS MONSTER. By TIM DINSDALE. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961. 25s.

THE ELUSIVE MONSTER. By MAURICE BURTON. Windmill Press, 1961. 21s.

On 2nd May, 1933, the *Inverness Courier* carried the headline "Monster Animal seen in Loch Ness". The resulting furore of Press publicity, soured by irresponsible hoaxes and baffled by the conflicting opinions of pundits who did not stir from their armchairs, soon created a climate in which sober investigation called for an unusual degree of courage. Nevertheless, today, popular interest in the problem is unabated and a new generation of zoologists is shaming the unenterprise of the last.

The first book on the subject was written by the late Cdr. R. T. Gould, author and broadcaster, a man with an incorrigible interest in strange phenomena and strange events. Gould spent a month on the Loch, interviewing eye-witnesses and studying the local topography. He carried the story of the "Monster" back to eighth century documents and showed a strong *prima facie* case for the investigation of an unknown animal. Apart from a few briefly derogatory reviews his book was ignored in academic circles.

In 1957 Mrs. Constance Whyte, a surgeon, married to the General Manager of the Caledonian Canal and for twenty years a resident of Inverness, produced a further book on much the same lines as Gould's but much more comprehensive. She added many more recent records, together with others collected from Gaelic sources by the late Dom Cyril Dieckhoff, and ended with an impassioned plea for an adequate professional investigation of what she considered to be an important problem of an animal unknown to science. Her book stimulated a great deal of practical interest, by the present reviewer among others, and is still the best general introduction. The publication of a third, revised, impression is therefore very welcome.

On the last day of a six-day visit in 1960, Mr. Tim Dinsdale, aeronautical engineer, shot a short film of a distant moving object in Loch Ness which, whatever it may be, is not readily dismissed as a mere motorboat. This event is the highlight of his very enthusiastic and readable book, in which, with more courage than zoological knowledge, he openly supports the view that Loch Ness harbours a relict population of long-necked Plesiosaurs. Unfortunately Mr. Dinsdale's book is marred by wildly inaccurate herpetology, spelling-mistakes, mihi-ism, inordinate padding and a far too uncritical approach to the testimony of witnesses. Students of the Loch Ness problem will need it for the sake of material not duplicated elsewhere, but the book is not to be recommended to those who only wish for a one-volume account.

Dr. Maurice Burton, the first professional zoologist to write a full-length book on the Loch Ness phenomena, has, down the years, written

a great many articles on this subject and has supported and discarded several explanations. He now supports the view that the "Monster" is substantially an artefact, produced by eruptions of débris and marsh gas from the bed of the Loch. His book is the best-constructed of the four available and valuable in driving one theory to its logical conclusion but, on the one hand, it is too partial in its advocacy, and on the other, even Dr. Burton is forced to admit that there is a hard core of evidence which may point to an unknown and zoological explanation. It is disturbing to read his caption to the well-known "Surgeon's Photograph" of 1934: "Although so animal-like it could as well have been a large tree-root brought to the surface by convection currents . . .", and then to turn up his article in the *Illustrated London News* of 20th February, 1960, where, after a prolonged consideration of this same photograph, he concludes "if this photograph is genuine, as I am now convinced beyond all doubt that it is, then there is no argument about the reality of the Loch Ness Monster, nor any doubt of its being a large animate body".

D. W. T.

ANIMALS AS SOCIAL BEINGS. By ADOLF PORTMANN. Hutchinson. 30s.

It is important that today, as man spreads his powerful influence over more and more of the globe's surface, we should understand the social needs of other forms of animal life. For, without society, the higher forms of life will perish. Isolated or disrupted groups of animals are soon eliminated and we must learn the rules of their social organization before it is too late. Space, food and health are not enough. For an animal to survive it must have the proper social—as well as physical—environment and a book that tells us more about "animals as social beings" is obviously of great importance. Unfortunately, Professor Portmann's new volume is not such a book. It tells us a great deal about the social behaviour of animals, but it does not tell us *more* than we knew already from the writings of the comparative ethologists over the past twenty years.

It could be argued that, even though the book is only a review of other people's work, it is nevertheless valuable as a popular summary—but unfortunately a much better summary already exists (*Social Behaviour in Animals*; Methuen, 1953), written by one of the greatest ethologists, Niko Tinbergen, and available at less than half the price of the new volume.

Although Tinbergen's book was published eight years ago, it is as up-to-date as the new volume, there being no reference by Portmann to any work published after 1953.

The great difference between Tinbergen's writing and Portmann's is that the former is setting out in a thoroughly objective way the results that he himself and his colleagues have obtained. He adds no embellishments. Portmann, on the other hand, has a habit of adding his own subjective comments to his descriptions of the ethologists' experiments, especially where human behaviour is concerned. For example:

"But what is *our* natural state of society? There is no such thing. In all stages of man's social life there is a world alien from, and opposed to,