

## Book Reviews

**The Animal Anthology**, by **Diana Spearman**. John Baker, 25s. This charming and compassionate anthology explores the complex and contrasting relationships which exist between Man on the one hand and Bird and Beast on the other; and its conclusion of course is Coleridge's

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All creatures great and small.

On our way to that conclusion we undertake a sort of Pilgrim's Progress in which we see animals through the eyes of the hunter who kills the thing he loves, of dog-owner and cat-lover, farmer and naturalist, poet observing the whole creation with sharp and wondering eyes, and philosopher recognizing that we and the animals share a "common fate": birth, procreation, death, evolution. As David Holbrook puts it in *Me and the Animals*:

I walk upright, alone, ungoverned, free:  
Yet their occasional lust, fear, unease, walk with me,  
Always. All ways.

Finally we are forced to admit our collective guilt in the matter of cruelty, exploitation and mass extermination. The last pages are devoted to those individuals who have tried to make amends on our behalf, by speaking out for love and condemning the destruction and the cruelty.

So it is not always a comfortable Progress; but it's a salutary one. I doubt if anybody could be quite the same again after reading for the first time John Davidson's terrible and beautiful hunting verses, *The Runnable Stag*, Hardy's scarcely bearable *The Mongrel*, A. C. Benson's *Live Bait*, which is extraordinary in the way it moves us on behalf of a wretched little dace:

One from the dripping net he took  
And squeezed his tender body hard,  
And pierced him with his cruel hook  
That all his limber mouth was marred.

Mrs Spearman's wide reading and scholarship confront me with a score of surprising poems which I've never met before; for instance an ode by Thomas Hood to Robert Martin, M.P., who sponsored the first Act against Cruelty to Animals ("Drovers may curse thee, Knackers asperse thee"), and a vivid piece by Hal Porter, *Sheep in Australia*:

Disquieted, illusionless, from jibbahs stuck with twigs,  
The visors carved with grieving mourn beneath judicial wigs.

Every anthology reader regrets something left out. My own small complaints concern cats and Kipling. I should have thought it impossible to anthologise cats without including Baudelaire's *Les Chats*; and quaint, at the least, in an animal anthology to ignore *The Jungle Books*. Too anthropomorphic, perhaps? But wasn't it Konrad Lorenz

who said that if a black panther could talk, he would talk like Bagheera?

But I mustn't quibble. It's a lovely collection; we shall all find gaps in it; we shall hope all the more for a companion volume soon.

JOHN MOORE

**The Original Water-colour Paintings by John James Audubon for "The Birds of America".** 2 vols. Michael Joseph, 25 gns.

Virtually the entire series of John James Audubon's unequalled paintings is reproduced in 431 plates in full colour with the accuracy and detail made possible by modern photographic techniques. A black and white reproduction of one plate, the California condor, is reproduced on Plate 16 opposite, by kind permission of the publishers.

Audubon was a pioneer of realism in the depiction of wildlife, and especially birds, and, as so rarely happens, the pioneer turned out to be a genius who has often been copied but never surpassed, or even equalled. We in Britain can be proud that when this great man was finding it hard to achieve recognition in his homeland, it was a visit to Britain and the helping hand of such far-sighted Englishmen as William Roscoe and the Rathbones of Liverpool who set him on the high road to material as well as artistic success.

I commend these two volumes to anybody wishing to make a very special gift to any ornithologist or bird-lover. It would be a splendidly appropriate retiring present, for instance, for someone who had given years of voluntary service in the natural history movement.

RICHARD FITTER

**Men and Pandas, by Ramona and Desmond Morris.**  
Hutchinson, 50s.

Some popular animals, like horses and dogs, have had a long courtship period with mankind, allowing time to gain acceptance, but the speed with which the giant panda has captured the affection of man has, by comparison, been a shot-gun wedding. Less than a century ago in 1869, the intrepid missionary, Abbé Armand David discovered the giant panda and revealed it to western society, which had to wait a further 70 years to see a live one. The privilege went to Ruth Harkness, who stepped ashore in San Francisco on December 18th, 1936, with a 3 lb cub, and, with the now familiar incredulous publicity which attends all panda transactions, started the Panda Epoch. It is perhaps hard to realise that to this date only seventeen individual giant pandas have been seen outside China, and yet our society is littered with the trinketry of the Panda Cult.

Ramona and Desmond Morris have now collated the whole intriguing story of these endearing animals in a book which not only covers the known biology of the species, but also traces the career of individual animals which have made headlines over the past thirty years, such as Su Lin, Ming and Chi Chi. As the circumstances surrounding the capture of the first giant pandas in the mid-thirties were mysterious, so is their relationship to other