

Roving Reporter

QUESTION—What do you think of the college's S.G.A.?

Literary Musings



By PROF. ROBERT G. MULDER

While I am not an authority on European travel, my office mate is or will soon become one. Summer before last he made the "grande tour" of most of the the important spots across the waters. He returned with two bushels of slides, all of which my wife and I viewed and thoroughly enjoyed at a two-hour sitting in his home. It was the next-best-thing to being there.

What's more is that he and another professor are conducting their own tour this summer. College credit in art and geography is being given and applications are still being received. It should be highly educational and extremely appealing to many of our students who prefer traveling to staying on the campus or in this historical town.

One hardly lands in the British Isles before he notices two things quite different from what he was used to back home. One is the exalted place given to pets; the other is a genuine interest in nature at the grass-roots level.

I suspect that Americans spend ten times as much money on their squeezey little darlings as the British do. I also suspect that most of it goes for nonessentials like coiffures, perfume, satin baskets and booties for their wee paddlers. This sort of thing, however, is no real measure of devotion.

What is important is that anyone can take almost any pet almost anywhere. It is assumed that Queen Bess or Rover will be more than welcome in boarding houses, hotels, motels, and private homes. Trains, buses and subways take them to their respective bosoms and no one raises an eyebrow.

But just try it here in the land of the free and the home of the brave and see how far you get. First of all, you had better travel in your own car and make sure that this or that motel will accept pets. It should not require more than a couple of days to go

through your various travel guides to find out before making reservations, and it is quite possible that you will have to take a fifty-mile detour to discover one.

FORGET ABOUT BUSES, TRAINS — what few are left, that is — do provide transportation in the baggage car, but what self-respecting animal wants to ride in such squalor? I did once smuggle Earl into a posh passenger coach for the ride from Washington to Richmond, but I worried all the way that we might all be put off in Ashland and have to thumb it the rest of the trip by way of Studley. In any case, it was not like England, where a cat would likely be munching a crumpet as the scenery of Devon slipped by.

In 1931 English cats were enormous. By 1958 they were not so spectacular, and by 1963 it was hard to find one weighing over fifteen or sixteen pounds. It was my own Earl who pointed out to me that the size of English cats varied in direct ratio of the devaluation of the pound sterling. I just hope that the forthcoming decimal currency, an abomination in the sight of the Lord, will not reduce them to the dimensions of a chipmunk.

Now about the Englishman's devotion to nature. Perhaps it is not so great as it used to be. Air travel has taken its toll of those who used to stay closer to earth by train, by car, by bicycle or on the hoof; yet, this British devotion to the byways and the hedgerows is still a vital part of experience. Bird watchers, hound chasers and just plain farmers who want to know what the water holes are doing keep the tradition alive.

IN BOOKSHOPS FROM LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM to such remote villages as Swaffham the shelves display an incredible number of volumes on the care of pets and on identification of fish, animals, flowers, trees, and insects. They come in paperbacks and handsomely illustrated copies — from the supremely useful Penguin guides to the expensive limited editions in color.

THROUGH THE YEARS I acquired a respectable clutch of them, and I am happy to report that John Burton's "The Oxford Book of Insects" (Oxford University Press, 208 pp., \$10) has recently come my way. In the same series and uniform with this volume are others that cover wild flowers, garden flowers, birds and flowerless plants. Of the 20,000 or more British insects that flit, fly and crawl, nearly 800 are herein described and illustrated in full color. Because they are spectacular, moths and butterflies are emphasized.

Whether or not you ever tread British soil in quest of a flea beetle, a mayfly or a lacewing, you should find this guide helpful when you read references to them in the novelists and poets.



Theresa Trigg

They're trying the best to benefit the students. But you can't please all the students all the time.



David Talton

I think there is a lot more to it than meets the students' eye.



Sid Bartholomew
What S.G.A.?



Kathi French
I haven't heard too much about it. They're trying.



Claudia Hall
I never hear that much about it.



David Hitt
No comment.



Jimmy Yeatman
I haven't seen anything yet, but I'm hopeful.



Betty Melton
I can't say anything about it because they haven't done anything. Maybe with the new elections things will pick up.

SMOKE SIGNALS

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