

Anyone who has witnessed Mervyn Cowie addressing a public meeting in his rather deliberate and imperious manner will find it hard to imagine him as the man who once sat and chatted with the old Masai, Lindolei, round his camp fire, or as the person who sat on the floor of the passage outside the Land Officer's office in Nairobi and refused to move until his request was met with. He can justly claim to have been a sit-downer nearly twenty years before certain extremist elements in England decided to adopt this method of being noticed!

C. A. S.

SIMBA. By C. A. W. GUGGISBERG. Bailey Bros. and Swinfen. 42s.

The author has taken infinite pains, supported by much careful research, to place on record what must be the most comprehensive account which has ever been compiled of the history, distribution, attributes and habits of the lion. Both informative and instructive it is moreover beautifully illustrated with his own photographs, some in colour, showing many aspects of the lion's day-to-day life. He is to be congratulated on the result. In fact he can claim 25 years' first-hand study of the lion in its wild state. A reviewer familiar with the subject is apt to be critical, but *Simba* has nothing to fear on this score.

Much of what is recorded about behaviour is derived from Mr. Guggisberg's patient, meticulous observations made over a period of years in the Nairobi National Park, in Kenya, when he was most ably assisted by his wife, not infrequently in circumstances of considerable difficulty.

The author refers to a widely prevalent idea that "Photographs of lions taken from a car in a game reserve, cannot be considered as proper nature documents". On the contrary the reviewer agrees with Mr. Guggisberg that an unmolested animal in a reserve is far more natural than what is often the furtive, frightened beast without.

He also quotes from Stevenson-Hamilton's Kruger National Park experience, which has been corroborated elsewhere, that "lions increase in proportion to the animals on which they feed"; and thus Nature regulates lion populations. One of the most illuminating passages, which all prospective big game hunters should particularly heed, concerns the dynamics of the lion's charge. It is probable that the functional changes described are equally operative in the cases of most wild animals and this will tend to explain the tenacity of life exhibited momentarily or temporarily by a stricken creature, which can be so very dangerous when it happens to be an African buffalo—at times perhaps the most tenacious of all.

*Simba* ranks as one of those books which once started is hard to put down. It has a valuable bibliography which covers eleven pages.

The style would have been improved had certain irritating solecisms—such as "big cats", "yellow cats", and "yellow killers", if these can be so described—been omitted. The present-day competition from certain less expensive wild animal books of outstanding excellence suggests that a price of forty-two shillings is too high.

C. R. S. P.