

I trust that those without the knowledge or the proper facilities will not be lured into keeping monkeys; they are *not* pets that the novice should seek to own.

MAXWELL KNIGHT.

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

One expects something good from the versatile zoologist Desmond Morris—also an accomplished painter—and his talented wife, and this most interesting and informative production does not disappoint. Aptly described as “not just a book about snakes”, but a discourse “on the odd relationship that has developed between man and snake”, they call urgently for “a more sympathetic attitude towards a much used and much abused but nevertheless absorbing and remarkable creature”. The research entailed in their masterly exposition of a vast subject, world-wide in coverage, must have been tremendous.

The response to a questionnaire addressed to some thousands of juveniles produced some rather gloomy statistics of snake-hate; nevertheless one is aware that increasing numbers of the young generation are more and more taking a keen and very welcome interest in the study of snakes, and this fascinating and thorough account of the reptilian story from every possible aspect is particularly opportune. It should encourage a lively interest in what many still regard as an unwholesome subject, and help to halt some senseless persecution. The presentation is skilful and the illustrations delightful; altogether an attractive, exceptionally readable and highly recommended book.

C. R. S. PITMAN.

**Town Fox, Country Fox, by Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald.** Deutsch, 25s.

Another of the “Survival” series of books on British animals, this one discusses most aspects of the life of the fox in this country in the author’s familiar easy style. Various writers on the life and habits of the animal are quoted at some length, but on more than one occasion the author expresses his doubts or dissension; and if it is sometimes simply a case of one personal opinion against another, this gives point to his comment that there is still a good deal to be learnt about some details of Reynard’s life. He gives reasons for thinking that the fox is achieving not only “survival” but increase. From the old records, or lack of them, he infers that foxes were nowhere plentiful in this country in the late 18th and early 19th century; with the boom in fox-hunting it became necessary to import thousands from the Continent. The statistics quoted suggest forcibly how numerous the animal is today, not only in the country, but in suburbs and sometimes even well within large towns. There is a bibliography, which, however, *inter alia* omits *The Handbook of British Mammals*.

COLIN MATHESON.

**The Harvest That Kills, by John Coleman-Cooke.** Odhams, 25s.

There can no longer be any naturalist or farmer in this country, or indeed anyone interested in the countryside, who has not heard something of the arguments about the persistent organo-chlorine compounds such as dieldrin, aldrin and heptachlor. On the other hand, too few people have any real knowledge of the size of the problem, of the great benefits which the use of chemicals has bestowed on mankind in the fight against disease and hunger, and of the ever growing danger which the Nature Conservancy have described as “the poisoning of our whole environment.”