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572

"GREEN PARROT" NOT TOO RESTRAINED

ANDRE GIDE'S "Travels in the Congo" exhibits a civilized and sensitive man breaking his heart, losing his health, and torturing his nerves when confronted by a brutal and sordid panorama. When an Anglo-Saxon faces a pagan world, he sees things either as a missionary or a romanticist. M. Gide is a Frenchman and a realist. He fails to see beauty or sex significance in the primitive dances; the women are old and hideous, the music is monotonous, and the dust kicked up by the dancers irritates his throat. The jungle landscape is often tedious. The dirt of the Negro villages revolts his very soul.

M. Gide is not thrown into ecstasies by superficial wonders, but he is profoundly moved by the tragic state of the native population. In vain does he try reading Goethe, taking sleeping powders, and chasing exotic butterflies; the miseries of the natives haunt his trip, and he writes of them with pity and without disdain. With its distinguished writing, its fine thinking, and its dramatic undercurrent of a deep personal experience, M. Gide's book stands far above the run of travel literature.