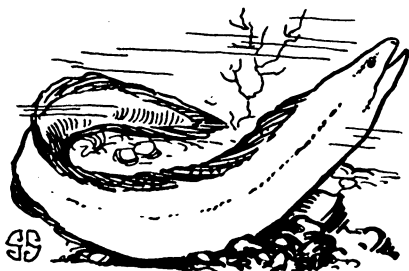


NATURE RAMBLINGS

Natural History

By FRANK THONE



Sea-Eel

Seers of sea-serpents have become scarcer during the past couple of decades; whether this is due to the increase of knowledge or the decline of drink might be hard to determine. But though the snaky monsters that used to haunt the front pages of summertime news have been let off with no better than a Scotch verdict, there are some snaky things still left in the sea that are all too real.

There are, of course, a few real snakes that live in the sea. They are very poisonous, but fortunately they are also very far away—off the coast of India. But right here at home, and strung along the coastlines of much of the rest of the world, there are big sea-eels, commonly called morays, that have more than a snake's viciousness, even though they have none of a snake's venom.

Morays like to live among the rocks where the thick seaweed grows and the tide swirls twice a day. There is good picking there—incapable little fish, and the softer-shelled crustaceans, and once in a while an overturned mollusk. Abalone hunters on the southern California coast say they have to be on the lookout for these hungry eels all the time, lest when they pry loose one of their shellfish they lose it immediately under a swirl of darting heads and writhing bodies.

And their anxiety is not all for the fate of their prey, either. The moray has plenty of savageness and not much sense, and will lunge at anything that moves and try to wrench out a mouthful of flesh. Fortunately, morays do not frequent the sandy beaches used for bathing, but anyone venturing into moray-haunted rock-tumbles in a bathing suit stands a chance of being most viciously bitten.

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

First Glances at New Books

THE EARLY STORY OF MANKIND—Marion G. Clark and Wilbur Fisk Gordy—*Scribners* (88c.). A simple and attractive schoolbook on a subject that is gaining the attention of curriculum-makers. The story starts with famous Greek and Norse myths, which show how our forerunners explained the beginning of things. With this basis, it proceeds to the realities of the early world, the homes, stone tools, arts, and beliefs of primitive human beings, and thence to the old civilizations of Egypt, the Near East, Greece, and Rome. The suggestions at the end of the chapters, "Things you may like to do," and the self-testing games are cleverly devised.

Ethnology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

SOCIAL CHANGES IN 1928—William F. Ogburn, Editor—*University of Chicago Press* (\$1). A current record of progress in many different fields of social life.

Sociology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

DACIA—Vasile Parvan—*Cambridge Univ. Press* (\$3). Deals with the early civilizations of the Carpathian and Danube lands of Europe, told as a result of fifteen years of excavation. The volume is compiled from a course of lectures given by Prof. Parvan at Cambridge.

Archæology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

WHAT MEN BROUGHT FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA—Marion G. Clark and Wilbur Fisk Gordy—*Scribners* (\$1). A child's story of mankind, which opens by tracing the development of wandering, barbaric tribes into the French, English, and Spanish nations which were to play the leading roles in American exploration and colonization. A series of chapters on the ways of life in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance follows, and with this preparation the young reader or student is ready to understand the main points of the book—what the Europeans brought to America and what they found here.

Ethnology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

STRANGE BIRDS AT THE ZOO—Julia T. E. Stoddart—*Crowell* (\$1.50). Monologues and conversations by birds in the zoo, written for younger children.

Ornithology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

AN OUTLINE OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY—Edited by Gardner Murphy—*Modern Library* (95c.). The reader who wonders how minds go astray and how they return to normal will find this little book of great interest. Though small, the volume contains more than three hundred pages and covers a surprising territory. The chapters are by well-known specialists in abnormal psychology and the subject matter includes various aspects of insanity, feeble-mindedness, personality twists, and the origin of abnormal trends in children.

Psychology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

THE EXCAVATIONS AT DURA-EUROPOS—Edited by P. V. C. Baur and M. I. Rostovtzeff—*Yale Univ. Press* (\$1). At this old fortress-town in North Africa, an expedition from Yale and from the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters has been digging out towers, bastions, the city gate, statues, inscriptions, and small objects, all of which shed light on the history and culture of the Hellenistic-Roman period. The report deals with the first season of work, in the spring of 1928.

Archæology

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

THE PEOPLE OF THE TWILIGHT—Diamond Jenness—*Macmillan* (\$3). Two years among the primitive Eskimos of the Coronation Gulf region of Arctic Canada gave rise to the interesting experiences detailed in this book. The great Nansen pleads with the author that the Canadian people and authorities allow the Eskimos to live their own lives in such a way that the game may be preserved along with the economic balance which has arisen in those Arctic regions.

Ethnology—Exploration

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE HIGHWAY RESEARCH BOARD—Roy W. Crum—*National Research Council* (\$2). Each year the scientists whose labors provide smooth and economical travel surface for automobiles and trucks meet in Washington under the auspices of the National Research Council to discuss the science of road-building. The proceedings of the last meeting are full of facts vital to highway engineers.

Highway Engineering

Science News-Letter, September 14, 1929