

SATURDAY EVENING  
LITERATURE

579

NEW YORK CITY

APR 26 1929

CRITIC.

### Travel

TRAVELS IN THE CONGO. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Translated from the French by DOROTHY BUSSY. Knopf. 1929. \$5.

In picking out André Gide to accompany a commission sent to investigate administrative conditions in French possessions in Africa, the French Government paid a deserved tribute to his extraordinary powers of observation and to his equally great gift of sympathetically understanding what he sees. His "Travels in the Congo," which has probably served as his report to the French Government, takes the form of an intermittently kept journal.

Gide often forgets the jungle round him in meditations far removed from any it inspired. Their interspersions through the journal is rather distracting to those intent on following the route of the commission, though to others they will doubtless add value to the volume. As a whole, it is not a particularly absorbing travel work, especially to those familiar with the vivid and comprehensive records of the Citroën Expedition and the works of many who have visited the same region. The negligent languor of an invalid shows itself in the pages describing the way to the French colony, and much space is devoted to matters of administration there which are of less interest to American than to French readers. The best of the volume is what Gide has to say of the psychology of the natives, of their dances, songs, and rituals. The book is abundantly supplied with pictures.