# Texan Tells Story

THE APE OF HEAVEN. *By Royal Dixon. Dallas: Mathis, Van Nort.*

A new Dallas publishing firm makes its bow with a novel, "The Ape of Heaven," by Royal Dixon. A distinguished naturalist, Mr. Dixon is the author of "The Human Side of Animals," "The Human Side of Plants" and other similar books but this is his first venture into fiction. In an unusual story he advances a startling theory on the possibilities of development among the anthropoid apes.

Against the background of a mission in an African jungle, young Chester Hungerford sought to find peace by working with the natives and observing the tropical plant and animal life around him. The primitive Africans stubbornly resisted most of his efforts to better their lot and save their souls but the white ape, Hilda, whom Hungerford befriended, proved an amazingly apt pupil. The part of this improbable tale relating the inception of the bond between the thoughtful man and the animal, whom he recognized as a genius of her kind, is told with a skill that almost persuades the reader to accept Hilda's accomplishments as actual.

The arrival at an adjacent army post of Lady Cornelia is a jarring note—even Hilda recognizes the woman as such by throwing the teapot in her direction when the English lady first visits Hungerford. Melodrama is not out of place in the African jungle but the incident in which the apes attack the camp with Hilda in the role of the white men's savior is somewhat far-fetched. Nor is Mr. Dixon at his best in the love scenes between Hungerford and Lady Cornelia. He is more skillful describing the tropical vegetation and in noting details of jungle life than in furthering the action of his story.

In format, "The Ape of Heaven," is attractive. The book is well printed, sturdily bound, and the jacket design by Chester Snowden catches the eye. There are a few lapses in proofreading (one substitution of bishop where Colonel is intended is especially confusing) but as a whole "The Ape of Heaven" is a book of which Dallas need not be ashamed.