

REVIEWS.

Excursions in the Caucasus. Montagne bianchi e Uomini rossi. Diario della Spedizione al Caucaso organizzata dalla Sezione di Trieste del Club Alpino Italiano nel 1929, con 75 fotografie e 5 carte. By Dr. Andrea de Pollitzer. Editoriale Italiana Contemporanea, Arezzo, Milano, 1932.

THE author of this entertaining work, though a native of Trieste, prefers the language of his new nationality. Dr. de Pollitzer is at pains to disclaim any literary pretensions for his letterpress; he insists that it is a diary composed out of notes written on the spot from day to day and often from hour to hour. The result is a volume that offers a lively and, we believe, faithful picture of the conditions of travel in the Northern Caucasus in 1929. The writer has a quick eye for the humours of the road; he has also a ready tolerance for its delays and discomforts, he is content to suffer patiently, if not gladly, its numerous trials. He can even put up with the Caucasian habit of never coming to an agreement for a vehicle, or horses, without at least a day's preliminary bargaining. He joins lightly in the Pilgrimage to Elbruz, a motley company of both sexes gathered from the confines of Europe and Asia. He is not deterred by the discovery that the promises held out to him represent intentions rather than facts. Naltchik, it is true, proves to have a railway station and to be the seat of a local administration. But its Grand Hotel is grand only in name: a most unflattering account is given of its accommodation. The newcomer must be prepared to find beds in the passages and on the floor, and its one bath long *hors de combat*. As for the autobus advertised as running up past Urusbieh to the foot of Elbruz, he will learn that it runs at strictly irregular intervals and is generally full. The passport that has been obtained after several weeks' delay from Moscow requires to be supplemented by permits which have to be extracted from local officials, who keep no office hours. The old order has indeed changed, but much of its spirit survives. *To-morrow* is still the national password.

We have been led to emphasize first the drawbacks attending mountain excursions in the Caucasus. There is something to be urged on the other side. It must in fairness be allowed that there are extenuating circumstances. The local authorities of 'the autonomous Province of Balkaria-Kabarda'—that is, of the northern valleys of the Caucasus from Elbruz to Adai Khokh—seem to be well disposed to the opening of their district to tourists as well as to mountaineers.

Dr. de Pollitzer refers frequently in his text to this official attitude, and he gives us an appendix entitled 'Counsels to Tourists.'

He describes two local agencies—embryo Cook's—that have as their object the provision of facilities for the convenience of the pilgrim.

These bodies are known popularly as the Sov-Turist and the Proletarski-Turist. The first-named acts mainly in drawing up and to a certain extent organizing personally conducted tours. The other has a less ambitious but more practical scope: it concerns itself mainly—as its name suggests—in a practical endeavour to make the Pilgrimage to Elbruz safe and easy for the proletariat. With this object it has erected a series of shelters—crude imitations of the Club huts of the Eastern Alps—which furnish pilgrims with lodging and food at fixed prices. They are known as *Bases*. Further, on the rocks that pierce the icefields of the great volcano it has built rude cabins like the old Grands Mulets hut. Unfortunately it has not so far succeeded in creating any body of native guides instructed in the use of the rope.

The danger arising from this ignorance was well illustrated in the author's first adventure. He attacked Elbruz with a party of four—himself, a compatriot, and two Caucasians. All the four were prostrated on arriving at one of the refuges by mountain sickness; they then wandered *separately* in fog over the frozen slopes. The only man to reach the top of the western peak was one of the Caucasians, who proved himself in subsequent expeditions to possess the makings of a guide. He found in the cairn a card recording Sella's ascent in 1889, and mistakenly brought it down as a proof of his own success! The other Caucasian bolted from the hut, having previously made free with the provisions.

Undeterred by this initial rebuff, our travellers sought for and found a district close at hand where they might hope to meet with maiden peaks of more moderate height. They were recommended to explore the Tiu-tiu valley, a tributary which joins the Baksan below Urusbieh. Here at the northern end of the long Urubashi spur they were rewarded by finding two summits of over 12,000 ft. still unconquered, and, in company with the Caucasian porter who had been with them on Elbruz, in planting stone-men on the top of both. Dr. de Pollitzer subsequently crossed by a new snow-pass to Cheghem, whence he returned by a perilous cart-road to Naltchik.

His volume has some effective illustrations, and in the text numerous photographs of roadside groups and incidents. A good many pages are devoted to accounts of life at Moscow, which lie beyond our scope here. Readers who plan a visit to the Caucasus may, however, do well to study the twenty-five pages of 'Counsels to Tourists in the Caucasus' which serve as an appendix. It contains a list of villages in Suanetia where climbers may hope to find some sort of accommodation.

D. W. F.

The Italian Expedition to the Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkestan (1913–1914). By Filippo de Filippi. With chapters by G. Dainelli and J. A. Spranger. Illustrated with 2 coloured plates by R. W. Spranger, 15 panoramas, 4 maps in colour, and over 300 illustrations in the text from photographs by C. Antilli and other members of the expedition. 10 × 7½; xvi + 528 pages. London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1932. Price £2 10s.

THIS is a scholarly book, a mine of information, containing the best bibliographical notes and references yet published on this region. We have to go back to 1875—and Drew's *Jummoo and Kashmir*—to find a comparable volume. It is more than a translation of the Italian edition of 1924 (see 'A.J.' 37, 397), for the text has been thoroughly revised, and the delay has enabled de Filippi to include reference to the explorations of Mason and Minchinton in 1926, of the Duke of Spoleto and Balestreri in 1929, and of Dainelli in 1930. Nobody going to Baltistan, Ladak, or the eastern Karakoram can commence his preparations better than by reading this book. The translation is very well done: perhaps the word 'fusion' on p. 324 might be better rendered *melting*; and nearby (p. 320) there is one actual misprint! Vigne's date is given as 1873 instead of 1837. Not much of a bag for the captious reviewer! The successful conversion of the place-names from the Italian into the recognized English spelling has involved great care and labour.

The book falls naturally into three parts—Baltistan and Ladak, the exploration of the Rimu glaciers, and the return through Chinese and Russian Turkistan. It is further arranged almost on the plan of a series of articles, each complete in itself, but connected together by the thread of travel. An enormous length of route was travelled, both by the main caravan and by subsidiary parties led by Dainelli and survey detachments under Wood and Spranger. There is much of history, ethnology, and geology, besides the travelling and the exploration; and all compressed into 500 pages without any loss of style or readableness.

A general notice of this book will be found in the *Geographical Journal*, but it is worth while drawing attention to some points which are of particular interest to mountaineers. In Chapter IX the journey up the Shyok valley is described with a wealth of illustration surpassing that of any previously published account. The great peaks of the Nubra-Shyok divide will certainly attract future climbers, and these photographs are very welcome—if not exactly encouraging. Then as to the main objective of the expedition, the exploration of the Rimu glacier system—the writer of this notice was stopped in 1909 by the almost complete absence of horse-feed in this direction. De Filippi therefore sends back all his animal transport as soon as he had dumped all his stuff on the Depsang plains, at a suitable permanent base, from henceforth depending entirely on coolie transport, and that necessarily reduced to the lowest possible numbers. A simple solution: but only possible if the scheme has been worked out in every detail before

leaving Europe. As to his work on the Rimu, a six weeks' campaign in unfavourable conditions, British mountaineers will note with pleasure the constant care taken about roping coolies (p. 341) on snow, and, perhaps with a shade of chagrin, the successful use made by the Italians of simple paraffin stoves for the coolies' cooking arrangements (p. 345, footnote), a plan no one else seems to have thought of. But then did not the Italians solve the Mount Everest boot problem, last century, on Mount St. Elias?

The author evidently perceives (footnote 2, p. 415) that *Kārā-kōrūm* is the proper spelling and pronunciation of the name, but with a modest deference to orthodox authorities he has throughout continued to use the spelling Karakoram. All other *korum* place-names are correctly so spelled on our maps of Central Asia. Probably in the case of the 'Karakoram' mountains and Pass it is their closer proximity to India which has produced this anomaly. The short *a* in Urdu is pronounced like an English short *u*, but this sound is of course written *a* in the transliteration of Indian place-names; so that Anglo-Indian writers would be very apt unconsciously to 'Indianize' the Turki *um* into *am* (pronounced *ŭm*), and so give us the hybrid form 'Karakoram.' But Vigne, Shaw, and Trotter are good enough authorities, and should ultimately prevail.

A charming feature of the book is the author's attitude to previous travellers. So far from endeavouring to enhance his own achievements by depreciating, or omitting reference to, the work of his predecessors, he goes out of his way to draw attention to them: a generosity by no means universal amongst travel writers of any generation. The same note is struck by his praise of Petigax; by his appreciation of Rasul Gulwan—'the ablest, most upright and companionable *caravan bashi* that ever was'; by his gratitude for the services of his coolies, both Baltis and Ladakis; and by his care for his horses (p. 304). Italy has every reason to congratulate herself on the uniformly favourable impression left behind by the great Italian expeditions to the Himalaya. They have the art of travel; and a large part of that art consists in getting the best out of the native population, a result entailing the exercise of unlimited patience, combined with a regard for local prejudices which it is sometimes not easy for the traveller to produce perpetually!

Throughout the book there is a wealth of illustration. The frontispiece is a good reproduction of a beautiful painting by R. W. Spranger, which, though made from a photograph, successfully recalls the upper Shyok flowing clear and placid in spring, before the melting of the snows has transformed it into a malevolent flood. The second coloured plate, of the lake discovered by Hayward in 1868 near the source of the Yarkand river, is a welcome introduction to the second part of the book. But it must be noted with regret that Antilli's beautiful photographs in the text have been spoilt by the English publisher. Fortunately the panoramas were printed in Milan, and leave nothing to be desired. Nothing could be better than 'Lamayuru' at p. 142, an Italian reproduction: while Dainelli's

arresting picture of the Castle of Chiktan is not improved by bad English reproduction (p. 243). But, poorly reproduced as they are, the text illustrations form a very fine series and add enormously to the value of the book, alike for the specialist as for the general reader. For the glorious panoramas, 7 in the text, and 8 of the Rimu glaciers in a portfolio at the end, no praise is too high. As the scope of exploration becomes more limited it must become more intensive in method. Complete illustration of the country becomes more and more desirable in the published report or narrative.

There is a useful general map of Kashmir, from Lahore and Pindi up to Kashgar and Andijan, which shows the enormous length of route travelled by the expedition, and makes it quite easy to follow the numerous and interesting side excursions of subsidiary parties, extending all through Baltistan and Ladak to Rupshu and the Aksai Chin. But the main achievement of the expedition is the map on the scale 1 : 250,000 of the Rimu glaciers, and of the sources of the Yarkand river.

It was a great undertaking : thought out, worked out and executed with precision and with complete success. No less is this book a worthy memorial of those efforts.

T. G. L.

Hors des Chemins battus : Ascensions nouvelles dans les Alpes. By E. R. Blanchet. Pp. vii + 264 ; illustrated. Editions de France. Paris, 1932. Price 15 francs.

THIS book appears to me to strike a new note in the literature of mountaineering. It consists of fourteen chapters, twelve of them dealing each with one of the great climbs with which the author's name is indelibly associated. The enthusiasm of the writer is contagious. 'Nous attendimes dans l'impatience le retour de l'été.' The narrative runs easily and pleasantly. The previous routes on the peak are outlined, and the reason of the urge for the new one is discussed. The preliminary ground is traversed in simple language gradually increasing in fervour and leading in each case to a culminating point in which difficulty, generally to the limit of possibility, seems to be more fraught with danger than is really the case—for the rules are observed. But the thrill of doubt and the joy of accomplishment are so described that both are shared by the reader, who, however his anxieties may have been stirred, is comforted by the knowledge that there will be a happy issue out of all the afflictions, for Blanchet and his guides still live.

In the accomplishment of these feats of daring, M. Blanchet has called to the aid of his own great experience and impeccable technique some of the most accomplished and renowned of guides. A trio such as Blanchet, Ravanel and Armand Charlet has perhaps never been matched in the sphere of rock-climbing ; while Kaspar Mooser's great qualities and sound judgment are ever in evidence in the many expeditions which he led—achievements which alone are sufficient to stamp him as one of the really great guides that the Alps have produced.

Of the twelve chapters alluded to, the two expeditions on the E. face of the Rothhorn and those on the Aiguilles du Diable on Mont Blanc du Tacul are the culminating points of rock achievement, while the conquest of the ice walls of the Lyskamm, the Zumstein, the Fletschhorn and the N.W. face of the Rimpfischhorn are examples of great icecraft and endurance. The climbs on the S.E. face of the Aletschhorn and the N.E. face of the Bieshorn have special interests of their own, while the descent of the Furggen overhang introduces us to the technique of the 'rappel,' in which the exponent is safeguarded, either guided by his feet upon the vertical cliff or swinging in the air below an overhang, by the spare rope alone: for experience has shown that the supposed additional security afforded by the 'corde de caravane' has really a reverse implication, as the two ropes are apt to become entangled. The last chapter of the book is devoted to the practice of this somewhat alarming pursuit, as exemplified upon the terrifying E. face of the Dent de Fenestrale (Pointe Beaumont—see 'A.J.' 41, 73), but real enjoyment of this strange movement, sometimes involving descent combined with a spiral twist and a pendulum swing, is one which can only be felt by those who have practised under safer conditions in the valleys. The technique of the method advocated by the author (there are several, see 'A.J.' 33, 209, and 41, 63) is briefly yet clearly described in the short list of 'quelques termes techniques' at the end of the volume, and perhaps the French word 'rappel' will become accepted internationally for this method of descent, as distinguished from 'abseilen' or 'roping-down.' Two English words, constantly made use of in the text, and for which there are no equally short French or German equivalents, appear in this short glossary—'leader' and 'cairn.'

The book is illustrated by twelve photographic reproductions, most of them enlargements from films taken by the author, sometimes, as in the excellent plates of the Rothhorn and Breithorn, from good stances, but often under conditions of extreme difficulty. They are all technically good and illustrate the text, while the photos of the Aletschhorn and the Fletschhorn by J. Gaberell make really beautiful pictures.

The fraternity of mountaineers of all nations has been recruited from wide sources: men of affairs, men of science, men of letters, soldiers, doctors, lawyers, schoolmasters, artists and poets. Many climbers have been ardent lovers of music, and some have been notable amateur exponents. My late companion, R. L. Harrison, for some years led one of the best amateur quartets in London; Lord Wentworth is celebrated for taking his 'cello to the top of the Schreckhorn; and M. Blanchet relates how a friend produced a violin out of his rucksack and insisted on playing Bach's 'Chaconne' on the top of the Matterhorn. Yet I doubt if, till now, the *profession* of music has supplied us with a first-rate mountaineer. M. Blanchet is a composer, a conservatoire examiner, and a pianist of international reputation, and doubtless the poetry of musical

expression has something to do with his literary style, which may pass from *pianissimo* passages to such gorgeous chords as these : ' la galopade de nuages noirs lacérés par les arêtes aigües, l'éclat bref des éclairs et les blasphèmes du tonnerre, les imprécations du vent s'engouffrant dans les brèches ' (p. 198). An English translation seems to be a foregone necessity, but a highly gifted translator will be needed to reproduce the spirit as well as the letter of the book.

M. Blanchet has dedicated his book to General Bruce : ' Hommage d'admiration et d'amitié, au soldat, à l'explorateur, à l'alpiniste ' ; and Bruce, in acknowledgment, has written an appreciative preface in which the extreme difficulty of the expeditions described is appraised, and success attributed to the security dependent ' uniquement de l'expérience et de la technique.' What appears to me to be an incompatible comment follows : ' Le principe modérateur si répandu de nos jours, " sécurité d'abord " n'est certes pas une des caractéristiques de ces pages.' The term ' Safety first ' came into usage in connexion with the idea of a pedestrian obtaining his objective (crossing a road) without being killed. There is all the difference in the world between these expeditions carefully planned and carried out by parties such as Blanchet collected, waiting ' above all for a combination of favourable circumstances ' (p. 105), and the undertaking by brilliant young amateurs of similar expeditions, but without the experience, the training, the organization and the patience. Half of the young enthusiasts who only last year made memorable expeditions on the Matterhorn, the Péteret, the Grandes Jorasses and the Charmoz are already dead. Blanchet and his guides still live, and will continue to live, just because they never forget all that is implied in ' Safety first.' No one who has climbed with Blanchet, even on a minor peak, can doubt for a moment that safe climbing is at the back of everything he does, and no amateur of to-day would be more competent to lead a party. Yet when he undertakes these great climbs, all of which have been carefully reconnoitred and considered, he strengthens and safeguards his attack to the uttermost. Risks must be run by all climbers ; but Blanchet leaves nothing that can be foreseen to chance.

General Bruce closes his preface with a reference to Schubert's ' Unfinished Symphony.' He wants more, and he knows that there is more : and, I am glad to have it first-hand, more is on the way. But the second movement will be different from the first. It will be less grandiose, but the delicate work of the soloist will be more in evidence.

C. W.

*Kamet Conquered.*¹ By F. S. Smythe. Pp. 420 + 61 illustrations and one map. London : Victor Gollancz. Price 16s.

It is easy to say that siege warfare has superseded rush tactics in high Himalayan climbing and revolutionized our methods of attack,

¹ This review was written originally for the *Himalayan Journal* : it is printed here by courtesy of the Editor.

for the statement is already a platitude. It is not so easy to put the new theory into practice, but this is what Mr. Smythe has done, and this book is a fine record of a very complete achievement by him and his party. What his modesty has omitted to stress is that to organize siege operations on a big Himalayan peak is more difficult than to make the old-fashioned dashing raid upon the mountain. Modern procedure is different now that the Everest expeditions have shown the way. To be successful in the modern way requires a bigger commissariat with a bigger force of human transport to carry and consume the loads. This involves more elaborate and careful organization, and the whole programme is more difficult to execute. Moreover, although the rush tactics may put a more violent strain on the human frame, the wear and tear of siege methods is more trying to powers of endurance. Mr. Smythe and his party are to be congratulated on their success in carrying out the new principles, and the expedition described in this book might well serve as a model, for it went without a hitch : the organization was perfect and even the weather seemed willing to co-operate.

Yet the author of *Kamet Conquered* is not merely an organizer and climber, for he realized that he must approach his great objective with the humility of a pilgrim. He says of the Himalaya : ' Respect their beauty, their majesty and their power, and they will treat you as you deserve ; approach them ignorantly or in a spirit of bravado and they will destroy you. Other mountains forgive mistakes, but not the Himalaya.' As he writes later, he has ' felt that strange exaltation and mystification that comes to some in the presence of great mountains,' and in the sublime Hindu text which he quotes there is a mystical answer for those who seek to learn the essential secret in the enchantment of the hills. Perhaps it can hardly be quoted too often : ' He who thinks of Himachal, though he should not behold him, is greater than he who performs all worship in Kashi (Benares). And he who thinks of Himachal shall have pardon for all sins, and all things that die on Himachal and all things that in dying think of his snows are freed from sin. In a hundred ages of the Gods I could not tell thee of the glories of Himachal where Siva lived and where the Ganges falls from the foot of Vishnu like the slender thread of the lotus flower.'

Not the least remarkable of the achievements of the Smythe expedition is the fact that, although consisting of six Europeans well equipped for high climbing, they managed to get along with only seventy coolies. This must have been due to the excellence of their Dotial porters, each of whom carried 80 lbs., a quite exceptional weight, for normally with fast travelling the average load should not be much more than 40 lbs. For the work at altitudes Darjeeling men were employed, but Mr. Smythe also formed a high opinion of the local Bhotias of Niti and Mana. He says of them : ' Given the same opportunities as Darjeeling men they would . . . develop

into even finer mountaineers, finer at all events in that they would not be cursed on a mountain with unnecessary superstition.'

A curious feature of the early attacks on Kamet from the W. and N. was the failure of the assailants to realize what Pocock of the Indian Survey pointed out—namely, that the immense peak of Eastern Ibi Gamin cut them off from their goal. An interesting account of all these previous attempts on Kamet is given at the beginning of the book.

The climatic conditions of British Garhwal are different from those of Everest: the climber meets with other friends and other enemies. On Kamet the wind seems to be rarely if ever formidable, while the sun can be overwhelmingly oppressive. Yet the temperature has been known to fall at night to 20 degrees below zero inside the tents, so that it is well that the air should generally be calm. Evaporation, too, is not so great as on Everest, and the climber on Kamet may have to wade through soft snow, and at great altitudes nothing is more exhausting than this.

As the attack on the great mountain developed, the climbers began to fear that the fine weather might fail them, and so they rightly yielded to the temptation of pressing on the final stages of the attack; but in so doing they cut short the process of acclimatization which had been working so satisfactorily. This speeding up of the programme probably aggravated their sufferings during the last phase of the siege. Mr. Smythe writes: 'Even the effort of rising to our feet served like the touch of a foot on the sensitive throttle of a powerful racing-car, to set the machinery of heart and lungs pounding furiously.' The last 1500 ft. were accomplished at the rate of 200 ft. an hour, perhaps eight times as slowly as one walks uphill in England, but abominable snow conditions had been partly the cause of this slow progress. The tremendous moment of the view from the top could only be enjoyed with faculties clouded by exhaustion and harassed by the cruel necessity of manipulating the camera. An interesting speculation is whether it was possible, as some of the party suggested, that the mountains on the far N.W. horizon were the Karakorams, distant more than 250 miles. I believe that Kilimanjaro was once sighted from a ship at sea, when 300 miles off, but this startling vision is said to have been due to reflection by mirage. It would be interesting to know whether any part of the earth's surface has ever been identified at anything like such an enormous distance.

It must have been almost a relief to the climbers when they withdrew from Kamet with their great task accomplished. After the strain of the all-absorbing conflict with the great peak the exploration of minor peaks and passes must have seemed a mere holiday. Yet even this sort of Himalayan work, if carried on for weeks, makes a care-worn mark on the temperament, and it is only when the travellers have descended to more normal levels that any overwhelming regret at leaving the mountains can be felt.

However, if only the party are not too long at the high camps, this business of discovering passes and minor peaks is the most fascinating form of Himalayan mountaineering. The climber who cares only for capturing a big peak necessarily knows exactly where he will get to if he is successful, for the top is a blatantly obvious goal. On the other hand, the explorer of passes is often shielded from the commonplace certainty of knowing where he is likely to come out. In Garhwal, for instance, he cannot tell whether he will be deflected back into his own valley, or lured into the wilds of Tibet, or find himself admitted unexpectedly into the secret high recesses of the immense and unexplored Gangotri Glacier. As Mr. Smythe remarks, this glacier may quite possibly turn out to be the biggest Himalayan ice-field E. of the Karakorams. It is such uncertainties as these that give mountaineering a thrill which is absent from the infinitely more toilsome and perhaps more tensely exciting task of besieging a big peak.

The mountains to which the expedition now proceeded were the ranges surrounding the various sources of the Ganges. Mr. Smythe describes the sacred river where, under the name of Alaknanda, it emerges from the combined snouts of the Bhagat-Kharak and Satopant Glaciers. The true source of the Alaknanda is no doubt here, but the book omits to mention that 'the slender thread of the lotus flower' does actually and unmistakably 'fall from the foot of Vishnu,' for it is only a few miles down the same valley that a tributary, a prodigious jet of water, shoots out horizontally from a glacier hidden far up in the recesses of a mighty precipice and falls hundreds of feet through the air. The foot of this astonishing fall is frequented by worshippers, and for all pilgrims this is the sacred source of the river.²

The expedition also visited the Arwa valley and thoroughly explored the watershed of two other sources of the Ganges. Peaks were climbed from here, and passes leading over into the great Gangotri Glacier system were discovered and crossed.

Excellent photographs by the author accompany the book, and appendices in which Dr. Greene writes as a specialist on the medical aspects of high climbing and suggests a new treatment; Mr. Holdsworth in a fascinating description of the flowers considers the ratio of altitude between Garhwal and the Alps to be as 2 to 1, and consequently infers that as Alpine plants from European altitudes between 7000 and 10,000 ft. are grown at home successfully, gardeners should not find it more difficult to grow Central Himalayan plants from levels between 14,000 and 18,000 ft.

In conclusion, it is to be noted by those who come after that there are several streams that can claim to be called the Ganges, and that the problems in the considerable area of their watersheds

² This fall resembles the waterfall above Bergli, the sensationally situated hamlet in the Vispthal, but the fall in the Alaknanda valley is on the Himalayan scale, and dwarfs its European rival.

have been by no means completely solved. The predecessors of the Smythe expedition crossed the actual crests of the passes from the Satopant and Bhagat-Kharak Glaciers, but returned by the same routes, and in neither case continued downwards for more than a few hundred yards along the apparently easy reaches of the glaciers leading presumably to Kedarnath and Gangotri respectively. Even when the Smythe expedition crossed from the head of the Arwa valley time did not allow of continuing down the newly discovered glacier system on which they found themselves, but they made a round and crossed back again into the Arwa valley by means of another new pass. High-level journeys completely uniting Mana with Kedarnath and Gangotri have never been recorded. The fulfilment of these adventures will be the privilege of those who come after.

C. F. M.

Sous l'œil des Choucas, ou les plaisirs de l'Alpinisme. By Samivel. Quatre-vingt dessins alpins, avec une adresse de Guido Rey. $12\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$; pp. 57; plates. Paris: Delagrave. 1932.

M. SAMIVEL'S pet bird, the chough, is a distant relative of the rook and the raven. This explanation is not quite useless: some readers may not be aware of this family connexion (*I* had to look it up in a dictionary), and this book points out the fact that choughs have much in common with their well-known cousin, Poe's Raven: love of exalted positions and sense of humour, for instance.

'Under the eye' of those delightful birds the author succeeds in creating a new Alpine *genre*: Alpine cartoonism. So far, the inspiration of Alpine sketches has been very backward. Lévêque's engravings, meant to illustrate the tale of H. B. de Saussure's ascent of Mont Blanc in 1787, have been copied for over fifty years. They therefore scarcely enabled the public to picture to themselves more modern ways of progression in the snow. Early photographers did not lay much stress on actual mountaineering. Consequently, for the last fifty years, cartoonists who wanted to deal with Alpine subjects could but use time-honoured jokes and illustrate them in rather fanciful ways. For instance, very few people have met saddle mules on mountain tracks; yet those distressing quadrupeds are still prancing through so-called humoristic sketches. You will notice, too, that human beings are always wielding alpenstocks: I have seen a few alpenstocks in umbrella-stands, in Chamonix and elsewhere, but I never saw one of them being actually taken out for a walk.

None of these blunders are to be found in M. Samivel's pages. He knows mountains thoroughly, both below and above the snow-line. Though he does not claim to paint mountain landscapes, many old friends loom up in the background of his sketches: the Matterhorn, the Aiguille de Grépon, the Mer de Glace, the Glacier de Talèfre, even the 'Lames de Plan Praz' and the Aiguillette d'Argentière, those last perches for disconsolate mountaineers on

rainy days. The author has a precise knowledge of club huts on rush days, and of lonely bivouacs on wind-swept ledges.

M. Samivel reviews the whole race of climbers, past, present and future, sparing no one, not even himself. His 'self-portrait' on the first page evidences a true modesty, and the fact that he uses much too short an ice axe. He devotes a few crushing pages to Alpine sightseers: 'High tide on the Mer de Glace' is worth a minute study, as every single detail tells its own tale. Then comes the most picturesque part of the book, the one devoted to real—or faked—mountaineers, Alpine pests, to begin with: all kinds of obnoxious creatures who succeed in making life a burden to their fellow-climbers. Three gems must be picked out of the tribe: 'L'alpiniste La-La-Itou,' 'L'alpiniste Chronomètre,' 'L'alpiniste Face-Nord.' You will see how well they know the Alpine Classics (p. 48). M. Samivel does not give a very convincing portrait of an English climber (p. 43); of course 'Lord Filaplomb' may not be a member of the A.C.

The best and longest part of the book deals with the adventures of a typical 'cordée': Baculot and Samovar. Those two delightful creatures meet with every possible annoyance and accident, not to mention many unpleasant sides of everyday Alpine life: a scorching sun shining on a long, crumbling moraine, overcrowded huts, etc. The glacier climbs down when they want to climb up; the moon shines merely to make their lantern worse than useless; the 'virgin peak' is topped with a disused sardine tin. Wind, bridgeless bergschrunds, mist, play their usual tricks in their usual way: they are matter-of-fact, dispassionate, half-humorous and thoroughly exasperating. Mountains are seldom blood-thirsty: they simply don't want to be bothered with intruders. Going one step farther, M. Samivel emphasizes his own point of view: even accidents are stripped of their melodramatic glamour ('C'était écrit,' p. 21). Samovar and Baculot manage to get into plenty of tight places, though it seems hardly correct to give such a title to the things they creep on, sometimes with appalling results. Yet a terrific fall (p. 33) happens to be 'la première descente par la face sud.'

As they want to do things thoroughly, they would never dream of leaving their *Climbers' Guides* behind, and some sketches illustrate the usefulness of the practice.

M. Samivel carries his reader far into the past. In the Stone Age, cavemen seem to have been already fond of climbing. The world was very young and the 'aiguilles' looked like eggs, having not yet been eroded by time and water.

Most of those sketches are splendid jokes, but they are not merely jokes. Each cartoon evidences the fact that the author is a keen worshipper of mountains in all their different moods. Being a humorist, he avoids big words and grandiose sentences, but a true though subtle poetry creeps into some of his sketches, in 'Lyrisme' for instance. In some way or other, all his heroes do homage to the

'Goddess Mother of the Snows.' Climbers can be silly, conceited, timorous; yet even Alpine pests feel a deep love for mountains, though they are hardly aware of it. They grumble and swear, but they go on climbing because they can't help it. Every one of them—every mountaineer throughout the world—is an *Alpiniste Roméo*. As for the mountain, it puts up with them but would rather be left alone: see what the chough says on the last page.

From a technical point of view M. Samivel is a great artist. His sketches are full of life. His choice of detail is perfect. *Sous l'œil des Choucas* is good fun throughout. Uninitiated people will enjoy the ludicrous cartoons, and mountaineers will be reminded of their climbs.

Cav. Guido Rey has written a short though charming foreword.

CLAIRE-ELIANE ENGEL.

Philip Glenn. By Max Mohr. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd. Price 7s. 6d.

THE author dedicates this novel to the memory of his friend, D. H. Lawrence. Hence there is too much SEX and too little climbing. Xavier Ragaz makes a solo first ascent of the N. Wall of Ladiz in the Karwendel Alps. He fixes pitons in a difficult place, and afterwards writes a whole book about the expedition, besides undertaking a lecture tour. Philip Glenn, an artist and libertine, visits the neighbourhood and falls foul of Ragaz over the business of opening up some pits on land sold by Ragaz to a Herr Fergus, a friend of Glenn. The trouble culminates in a hand-to-hand struggle in which Ragaz is severely bitten by Glenn. Glenn, accompanied by Fanny Purgasser and a guide, goes on a ski-ing expedition. Crossing a dangerous patch of snow against the advice of the guide, Fanny starts an avalanche and is killed. Ragaz goes to their aid, and here commences a friendship with Glenn. The two decide to repeat the N. Wall expedition. They go up to a hut, where they spend several days getting fit, and incidentally indulge in discreditable pursuits. Ragaz is a married man with a family. They successfully accomplish their climb after a number of exciting incidents. On the way up both are smitten with sunstroke. This particular N. Wall must bear a peculiar position in relation to the sun. Otherwise, if in execrable taste, the tale is well told.

Hunted through Central Asia. By P. S. Nazaroff. London: Blackwood. Price 7s. 6d.

THIS is a tale of an adventurous journey from Tashkend to Kashgar, but there is nothing of particular interest for the mountaineer. The author used only mule-passes, and gives but vague descriptions of the mountains. He is much more at home when describing the fauna and flora of the country traversed, and herein lies the interest of the book.

Alpine Days and Nights. By W. T. Kirkpatrick. Pp. 198, illustrated. London: Allen and Unwin. 1932. Price 7s. 6d.

MR. KIRKPATRICK has had a happy thought in collecting into one volume the series of interesting articles which were originally written by him and the late Mr. Hope for the *ALPINE JOURNAL*. It makes it very much easier to appreciate the achievements of this remarkable pair of guideless climbers whose reputation for sound and sane mountaineering was perhaps second to no others.

As might be expected, Mr. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Hope made a considerable number of new routes, but taken as a whole, they may be held up as a proof that a great reputation for guideless climbing does not necessarily depend on new climbs alone, to say nothing of the reckless and often suicidal performances carried out by thoroughly unsportsmanlike methods which appear to be an obsession of the young Continental climbers of the present day. I use the word 'Continental' intentionally, since the young British climber does not appear as yet to have come under the baleful spell of the particular class of scrambling which can only be effected with success by the aid of mechanical devices, and he cannot do better than to take such guideless climbers as Kirkpatrick and Hope as models.

Possibly the only criticism which can be directed against them is that they certainly did appear to have been benighted on a rather more than average number of occasions.

Mr. Kirkpatrick's style of writing is delightfully fresh and natural and entirely free from the tiresome padding which spoils so much of the work of Alpine authors. The chapter entitled 'A Day and a Night on the Nesthorn' is a model of what the story of a climb should be, and the same may be said of Mr. Hope's chapter 'Solitary Climbs.'

There are one or two minor errors, and on p. 27 'Schutz' should read as 'Schulz.' The titles of the two pictures facing p. 128 have been transposed by an error.

I feel sure that no one will regret the addition of this delightful volume to his library.

S. S.

Il Monte Rosa vicende uomini e imprese. By Eugenio Fasana. Pp. 464, illustrated. Milan: Rupicapra. 1931.

WE welcome this very readable and interesting book, in which Signor Fasana appears to have done for Monte Rosa what C. E. Mathews did for Mont Blanc and Guido Rey for the Matterhorn. It is worthy of note that, whereas the latter almost apologises for writing a whole book about one mountain, Signor Fasana, on the other hand, complains that one book cannot do it complete justice.

The author's plan—a good one—is to take his reader all round

the mountain, starting with the Macugnaga face and ending with Zermatt, devoting one or more chapters to the Macugnaga side of the mountain, to that of Valsesia, to Gressoney and Zermatt. Each of these chapters is rich in history and legend—general history and mountaineering history, together with the author's own Alpine experiences, and poetical and moral reflections. Every page shows his enthusiasm for the mountains and especially for this mountain. He gives us a description of a ski expedition in the spring to the Punta Gnifetti, and does not omit some advice to skiers, particularly spring skiers. The advice seems to be of a common-sense nature.

The author is not altogether guiltless of solitary climbing, but he does not err often in this respect, and we may forgive much to enthusiasm, just as we can admire and sympathize with his gallant, though unsuccessful attempt to ascend the Nordend by the 'Cresta di Santa Caterina' from the Jägerjoch. The photographs, which give views of the mountain from all sides, are excellent, but it is to be regretted that there is no list of them. The index of the text appears to be correct, and the map at the end of the book has proved most useful.

We appreciate the kind terms of the author's reference to the Alpine Club in the presentation copy.

J. E. C. E.

Walter Leaf, 1852–1927. Some chapters of autobiography with a memoir by Charlotte M. Leaf. 1932. 8vo. Pp. x + 338. London: John Murray. Price 10s. 6d.

IF reviews in this JOURNAL were strictly confined to matters relevant to the objects of the Club, there would be next to nothing to say about this book. Leaf's mountaineering has already been accounted for under the rubric 'In Memoriam,' 'A.J.' **39**, 123, and this volume adds only a minute correction. Leaf's acquaintance with Alpine heights began not in 1871, but in 1869 with the Piz Corvatsch (p. 63)—a small beginning, indeed 'a very easy lady's climb,' but still the beginning. Beyond this there is nothing about climbing in the unfinished autobiography.

But the Alpine Club is not a crowd of unlettered athletes who care for mountaineering alone, or only as a sport in which records can be made. Many of us are partakers in some of Leaf's varied interests and will be glad to learn more of them from his own record and from his wife's memories. We rejoice in having counted among our members not a few who left their mark in public affairs, in the learned professions, in the world of letters and art. One of our Presidents, Lord Bryce, was also President of the British Academy; and Lord Conway of Allington is happily still with us. Walter Leaf was not the least in that company.

The little I can do here is to pay a tribute to Leaf's scholarship. His classical work is summed up and estimated by Mr. Cyril Bailey at the end of this book. Homer was Leaf's speciality, but Mr. Bailey

justly points out that he was no mere specialist. He kept up his wider interest in the classics, and two little volumes of translations from the Greek Anthology, designed first as Christmas presents for his friends and published in 1912, reveal not only his fine scholarship, but a very considerable power of neat and effective verse-writing in English. This is much, but even more remarkable is Leaf's mastery of Persian (when or why he took it up seriously I do not know, but he was a born linguist). His book of 'Versions from Háfiz' (1898) includes the best and clearest account of Persian metre, so far as I know, that is readily accessible in English.

Leaf was eminently a Cambridge scholar: his æsthetic appreciation of Greek poetry and art rested on a solid foundation of accurate training in the language, the training of which the tradition has been maintained at Cambridge ever since Porson's day. The first thing I knew of his abilities was a brilliant piece of Greek verse shown up in a Trinity examination paper set by myself; in those days my classics were still pretty fresh. He was one of a notable band, including Verrall, Henry Butcher, and Maitland; the present Lord Balfour and Lord Danesfort (Henry Butcher's younger brother) are, I believe, the only survivors. Leaf's own account of that companionship in the chapter headed 'Cambridge Society' will be specially welcome to readers who cherish the humanist tradition of our ancient universities. Leaf himself had no doubt that it was good for a man of business to be a humanist and a linguist (see p. 311). And perhaps there is no better answer to the people who clamour for a merely technical and commercial education than to challenge their method to produce a Walter Leaf.

This book is the record of a life made happy, notwithstanding adversities, by the man's happy character; there is no doubt that it was the cause of much happiness for others.

F. P.

Bernina-Führer. Clubführer durch die Bündner Alpen, Vol. V—Bernina Gruppe. Edited by Marcel Kurz. Published by the S.A.C. Pp. 368 + 60 outline sketches and 6 sketch maps. Bern: Stämpfli. 1932. Price 8 frs. 50 cents.

THIS is a German translation by Walther Flaig from the Editor's French manuscript, and it is based on the works of Strutt and Corti, who with Bonacossa and a strong team of other experts have assisted in its production. It is therefore an authoritative guide representing the last word on the subject up to the end of the 1931 season, as well as a literary work of remarkable charm and, thanks to the skill with which it has been edited and printed, an immense amount of material has been compressed into pocket form. In fact, it has solved the problem of holiday reading for hotel and hut for all sufficiently acquainted with the German language to enjoy it.

The *Guide* covers the well-defined district bounded by the Upper Engadine and the Muretto, Confinale, and Bernina Passes and

describes 358 routes. The Editor indicates that he has tried to strike a happy mean between British conciseness and Italian detail, and he has certainly succeeded in conveying within reasonable limits of space a wonderfully clear idea of the special character of each route as well as of the district as a whole.

Considerable attention is given to nomenclature with the help of Professors Hubschmied and Bezzola (the former contributes a valuable appendix on place-names), and numerous anomalies even in the revised Siegfried Atlas which have resulted from a not unnatural hesitation between Romansch and Italian appear to have been satisfactorily removed, though the hybrid 'Biancograt' remains. An interesting example is the hitherto unnamed and unnumbered though much-crossed pass between the Tschierva and Boval huts north of Piz Morteratsch, for which 'Fuorcla da Boval' is obviously right. It has unfortunately been impossible to reconcile all the names in the sketches with those in the text.

We appreciate a note on the lack of attractive 'problems' in the Bernina, coupled with a warning that the *Guide* is intended for mountaineers and not for acrobats. The *Scerscenscharte* as the Fuorcla Scerscen-Bernina is now termed,³ contrary to a previously-expressed hope ('A.J.' 43, 322), together with the Fuorcla d'Argient are said to be the only uncrossed passes in the group, and this fact is commended to 'lovers of breakneck undertakings.'

References to frontier restrictions are numerous and pungent. They strike one as being inappropriate to a *Climbers' Guide*, but so are the restrictions to the Alps. We hope they may be unnecessary in the next edition, and in the meantime sorrowfully admit that it is right to describe difficulties and dangers unrelated to the art of mountaineering which nevertheless hamper the activities of the mountaineer. Doubtless owing to these restrictions the topographically important Scalino group and Cima Painale-Vetta di Ron ridges have had to be omitted. But it is a pity.

We offer our hearty congratulations to M. Kurz, to the S.A.C. and to all concerned in the production of this *Climbers' Guide*.

J. E. M.

Blodig's Alpine Calendar, 1933. Published by Messrs. B. H. Blackwell Ltd., 50 & 51 Broad Street, Oxford. Price 4s. 6d. post free.

THIS is the third English edition of Dr. Karl Blodig's Calendar, and he has broken new ground by the inclusion of pictures of mountaineering in England and Scotland. The photographic work is good and the reproductions excellent. There are also a number

³ By this we do not mean to say that there is a want of appropriateness—by analogy with the well-known and adjacent *Berninascharte*—in the new nomenclature. But it seems a pity that the old appellation could not have been preserved intact, especially as the depression is unlikely ever to receive a name on the Siegfried map.

of supplementary pictures—reproductions in colour of oil paintings—which give an added charm. This calendar is highly recommended, and the author and publishers deserve all the success it will undoubtedly achieve.

The letterpress is the only part still open to criticism. There are no 'chalk' mountains in the Alps: the translator means 'limestone.' In the photograph of the Matterhorn, the N. face is quite invisible—so is the Furggen ridge. We should hardly describe the Guglia di Brenta as the 'proudest mountain in the Eastern Alps,' surrounded as is this startling pinnacle by far higher summits.⁴ Neither are the Krimml waterfalls to compare with many others. The photograph 'On the Schüsselkarspitze' shows the kind of knots the modern amateur ties himself into, while that of 'Camping out on the Watzmann' represents the daily—or nightly—troubles of many too enterprising beginners. These few criticisms in no way diminish the value of a really artistic and altogether delightful calendar.

The Canterbury Mountaineer. No. 1. August 1932.

THIS modest little volume, limited in size not for lack of material but purely for reasons of economy, is a record of the remarkable pioneer-work carried out last season by the members of the C.M.C. This small body of enthusiasts, in less than five years, has thoroughly explored and mapped some sixty miles of the main divide; built several huts; hacked out tracks and conquered many virgin peaks. Though the highest peaks of the district barely exceed 9000 ft., the extent of their glaciation and the size of their icefalls are astonishing, while the sub-alpine approaches are every whit as arduous as the Tasman valley proved to Green fifty years ago, when it cost him many days' toil to advance some ten miles to the site of the present Ball hut. That the club has achieved so much in so short a time, with limited means and almost without accident, is a high testimony to the skill and common sense and perhaps even more to the cheery hardihood of its members.

All the necessary data are long since available for a complete *Climbers' Guide* to the Mt. Cook and Godley districts. At the present rate of progress among the mountaineers of Canterbury and Otago, it will not be long before their smaller but hardly less attractive ranges can also be adequately dealt with. It is much to be hoped that at the right moment both the man and the money will be forthcoming for such a worthy object.

H. E. L. P.

⁴ Perhaps this is why Italians have endeavoured to change its name to Campanile Basso?