at the Alpine Club on Saturday, December 2. This meeting, at which thirty-two representatives from twenty-three clubs representing about 7000 mountaineers, were present, showed clearly that the initiative of the Committee in taking the lead in forming the B.M.C. had been rewarded by the active and interested support of practically all the active and progressive mountaineering clubs in this country.

The Council at their first meeting proceeded to the election of the elective vacancies on the Committee of the Council and the Committee appointed three sub-committees: Public Relations, Publications, and a Programme sub-committee. The committee will meet quarterly or more frequently if necessary. The sub-committees are already in action. Committee Meetings have been held on Saturday, February 10, and Saturday, March 17, and a very full programme of work has been undertaken. It may be of interest to members that the Council of the B.M.C. has 15 Alpine Club members out of a total of 32. For the committee the figures are: 9 Alpine Club members out of 15. It is desired to record, with very grateful thanks, the help, advice, and encouragement which the Alpine Club has received from the officers and representatives of the many mountaineering clubs in this country in the work of forming the British Mountaineering Council.

GENERAL.—The work of the Committee during the past year has, in addition to the routine business of the Club, been mainly directed to our relationships with other clubs and the formation of the British Mountaineering Council. During the coming year, with the prospect of peace in Europe, more attention is being given to the reinstatement of the Club Rooms and similar improvements in the amenities of the Club. The Committee has further had under consideration the probable trend of income and expenditure during the next few years. It has been considered permissible to allow a small annual deficit during the war years in the reasonable expectation of increased membership and increased average subscription revenue in the post-war years.

REVIEWS

L'Epopée Alpestre. By Charles Gos. Pp. 186. Victor Attinger, Neuchâtel and Paris.

L'Epopée Alpestre is the title of M. Charles Gos' latest work. The subject is not new but M. Gos' delightfully polished style gives it a freshness which makes the book a pleasure to read. The book takes the reader from antiquity to the present day and aims at conveying the gradual growth of interest produced by the mountains in men's minds through the ages.

M. Gos divides his subject into seven periods: 'L'Antiquité,' 'Le Moyen Age,' 'La Renaissance,' 'Le xvii^{e} Siècle,' 'Le xviii^{e}

Siècle, 1700–1770,' ' Le xviii^e Siècle, 1770–1800,' ' Le xix^e Siècle et notre temps.'

' L'Antiquité ' deals first with the pre-Roman era, showing that the earlier races made their moderately high mountain tops of Asia Minor and Greece the abode of their gods, held in great veneration, consequently ground not to be defiled by the presence of man. M. Gos states that the Greeks often erected altars and temples on the summits of the mountains and hills, but gives as an example the Parthenon on the Acropolis, which, however, can hardly be ranked as a mountain. The Phocians would appear to have been the first people to come up against the great barrier of the Alps and, by the evidence of the specimens of their coinage found on the Grand St. Bernard, they must have penetrated into the mountain regions and may have actually crossed the pass. It would seem quite probable that the mountain tribes inhabiting either side of the range might have found easy ways across and have established some kind of a trading route of which the Phocians availed themselves; and when Hannibal's and subsequently the Roman armies crossed the Alps, it is natural to suppose that they made use of the local knowledge of those tribes of their country in order to find the easiest routes for the passage of their armies. M. Gos tells us that the reactions of the Romans to the great mountain barrier differed considerably from those of the Greeks. Being men of the plains, they had no love for the mountains and, being of a less romantic nature, did not hold them in the same veneration but peopled them with hostile gods.

In the next two chapters, ' Le Moyen Age ' and ' La Renaissance,' the author gives us evidence of the early personal contacts with the mountains. The so-called ' première ' of Noah and his ark may well be left out of the reckoning. M. Gos no doubt knows his Old Testament, which states that the ark came to rest on ' the mountains ' of Ararat, which might quite well mean that its resting place was somewhere amongst the foothills of the group. He then gives references to the earliest recorded ascents of two high peaks made from different personal motives. That of the Canigou was from curiosity, by King Peter of Aragon in 1276 or 1288, who may be looked upon as the forefather of the modern climber, while the ascent of the Roche Melon by Rotario d'Asti in 1350 was made for purely religious reasons. Those two ascents were followed after another long interval by the conquest of Mont Aiguille by Antoine de Ville and his party in 1492, a remarkable feat of rock climbing in those days. But none of these climbs would appear to have aroused any desire in the participants to extend their knowledge of the mountains.

In the chapter ' Le xvii^e Siècle ' we gather that interest in the mountains made little progress. It became somewhat the fashion to regard them with a certain degree of horror. There were, however, notable exceptions to this attitude, such as François de Sales (Bishop of Geneva), Fléchier (Bishop of Nîmes), the Abbé de Cominges and the Abbé de Rancé. M. Gos tells us that two ascents only were

recorded during this period ; both of minor peaks, the Karwendelspitze (Bavaria) and Mont Thabor. We learn that all through the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, the interest of artists in mountain scenery was growing steadily.

In the next two chapters, ' Le xviii^e Siècle, 1700–1770 ' and ' Le xviii^e Siècle, 1770–1800,' M. Gos shows a marked increase of general interest in every direction in the high mountains, intensified by the improvement in the means of access and mode of travel. Writers of this period, and, perhaps in a lesser degree, the artists, gradually aroused the curiosity of the outside world as to what was to be seen inside the mountain regions. Most of the credit for this would appear to have been due to the recorded scientific researches of such men as Scheuchzer, Gesner, Albert de Haller, Gruner and others, followed in the latter half of the century by Saussure, whose narratives of travels amongst the mountains, which included his famous ascent of Mont Blanc, were very widely read ; but probably the writing of the romanticist Jean Jacques Rousseau did more than anything else to make Alpine travel really popular. The chapter which deals with the period 1770–1800 describes the impetus given to Alpine travel by which the number of tourists was immensely increased. In the last section of this chapter, M. Gos sets out the conclusions to be drawn from the abundance of travel, whether for recreation or for scientific purposes, the explorations of the pioneers of climbing or the discovery of the unknown valleys and easy passes, governed by the same aims. To meet the needs of the tourist, a new type of literature was created in the shape of guide books for the traveller, such as those by Ebel, precursor of Joanne, Hachette, Michelin, Baedeker and Ball which did not belong to this period. M. Gos appears to have overlooked the Murray guide books. Art also played a part in contributing to the growing popularity of the mountains by the production of colour prints, engravings, aquatints, depicting the scenery, chalets, national costumes, which served the purpose filled by the photograph of later days. These colour prints by König, Lory, Linck, Bacler d'Albe and several others are now much sought after by collectors and have increased very much in value.

In the final chapter, ' Le xix^e Siècle et notre temps,' M. Gos describes the expansion of Alpine travel, the great roads over the passes, the development of the various means of transport and the growth of the hotel industry, an analysis of the various phases through which the technique of mountain climbing passed up to the present day, beginning with the conquest during the first half of the century of some fifty great peaks by a number of Swiss mountain explorers and scientists such as the Meyers, Hugi, Studer, Ulrich and others, followed by the band of English climbers whose achievements, starting with the ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1854 by Alfred Wills and his guides, may be said to have laid the foundation stone of the popularity of Alpine climbing as a recreation. M. Gos cites the names of several of these early climbers, but the list is by no means complete. It is a little surprising that

M. Gos omits to mention Placidus à Spescha, nor is there any reference to a celebrity in another sphere of Alpine work, the great cartographer Imfeld. The professional mountain guide receives due attention, but M. Gos mentions four names only of the best known. As a list of the great men of this profession would obviously take up much space, it will suffice to state that there were many who certainly equalled the four mentioned in all the attributes of a great guide. Finally, M. Gos guides the reader through the gradual phases of the technique of mountain climbing with considerable dexterity.

It only remains to record our thanks to M. Gos for his masterly review of the history of the mountain in relation to man and his various activities. This delightfully written work should certainly find a place in every Alpine library.

SYDNEY SPENCER.

The British Ski Year Book, 1944. Silver Jubilee number. Price 10*s.*

MR. ARNOLD LUNN, who has edited the British Ski Year Book from its foundation, has now produced the twenty-fifth issue of a publication incorporating the Year Book of the Ski Club, first issued as far back as 1905.

The most striking characteristic of this Year Book is the high general level of its literary quality. It is not easy for an editor, who cannot pay for contributions, to find contributors who can write the kind of article which would be worthy of a place in the reputable monthlies and quarterlies. Of particular interest to members of this Club will be Lord Schuster's review of Mr. Lunn's *Switzerland and the English.* Lord Schuster is one of the few people competent to review every chapter of a book the author of which is not hampered by any pedantic consideration of precise relevance ; for Lord Schuster is not only a classical scholar and an authority on English literature, but is also conversant from within with the history of two clubs, over both of which he has presided, the Alpine Club and the Ski Club of Great Britain.

Members of this Club will turn with particular interest to his remarks on Mr. Lunn's treatment of the Alpine Club. Inevitably those who like history to be lifeless will resent the raking up of some incidents in Mr. Lunn's chapters, incidents which a writer, whose ambition is to describe the Club in relation to the spirit of the age, could not be blamed for including. Lord Schuster while paying a tribute to Mr. Lunn's ' genuine affection for the Club and his desire to be fair ' throws new light on some of the incidents mentioned by Mr. Lunn.

Colonel de Beer's article on his chalet at Davos contains passages which no anthologist will omit from a representative collection of Alpine prose. It is pure delight from start to finish, and had it been published before the author disposed of his chalet, it would have sent up the price which he obtained by many thousands of francs.

Captain Peter Lunn is the only racer in any country who has contributed something of permanent interest to the literature of ski racing. A chapter in a previous book was reproduced in the year books of continental clubs. In the present contribution he begins with a vignette of the Malta siege and continues with an effective description of the atmosphere of the ski championships. It includes the only description of wartime skiing in the volume, the result of a week's leave on Etna. The article concludes with an amusing challenge to those who regard the ski racer as an intruder into the mountain scene.

The Editor's own contribution is one of the best things he has written, but the implication that most people still like travelling fast downhill is inexact. By the time Mr. Lunn gets back to the Alps he may be old enough to have learnt that there are old gentlemen who love climbing gently up unbeaten snow, are horrified at the idea of having to slide fast down icy paths, and would welcome the existence of a club that would give them sufficient moral courage to descend by the funicular. So perhaps the wheel will turn full circle and he will found for us an Uphill Only club.

The illustrations are up to the usual high standard, and the charming studies of Swiss tourists in the remote Victorian age are in keeping with the traditions of a periodical in which the historical and cultural associations of Switzerland are never obscured by the record of athletic achievement.

I. G. AITCHISON.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY

By F. OUGHTON, Assistant Librarian

The following have been added to the Library :—

Publications of Clubs and Societies

Alpine Club, London. The Alpine Journal. Vol. liv, Nos. 266–269. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$. Pp. xi, 465. Illustrations, portraits, maps. 1943–1944

American Alpine Club, New York City, U.S.A. The American Alpine Journal. Vol. v, No. 3 (Issue 17). $9 \times 5\frac{7}{8}$. Pp. 313–450. Illustrations, portraits, sketch map. 1945

Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston, Mass., U.S.A. Appalachia, N.S. Vol. x, No. 12. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6$. Pp. 139–268. Illustrations, portraits, sketch maps. December 1944

—— Bulletin. Vol. x, N.S., Nos. 1–11. $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$. Pp. 224. January–December 1944

Association of British Members of the S.A.C. Annual Report and List of Members. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Pp. 64. 1945

Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland, London. Camping. Vol. xl, Nos. 1–6. $9\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$. Pp. 89. Illustrations, diagrams. January–December 1944

Canterbury Mountaineering Club, New Zealand. Extracts from Club's Journal. No. 13, 1943–1944. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Pp. 55. Illustrations, portraits August 1944