REVIEWS

Give Me the Hills. By Miriam Underhill. Pp. 252. Methuen & Co., London. 1956. Price 25*s*.

WHEN Miriam O'Brien first led a man over the Grépon, then traversed it alone with another woman (in 1929), the ALPINE JOURNAL kept its nerve really splendidly : ' We will not quote Mummery's ancient jibe apropos the Grépon ' was the only editorial comment. All the same, these traverses were a notable landmark in women's progress from being regarded as a special kind of mountaineer, who was to be praised for expeditions that would cause no comment if made by men, to being judged on their own merits as mountaineers pure and simple. As happened also in many other fields of women's rights, it was only through a display of feminism that masculine bias could be counter-weighed, and a right balance attained. What women climbers of that time lacked was experience in leading : not just being first on the rope, but running the whole expedition. Women had led in the Alps before, and there had been the spirited Pilley-Wells-Bray sorties from Saas in 1922, but I think Miriam O'Brien and her partners on the rope—Alice Damesme, Winifred Marples, Micheline Morin, Jessie Whitehead—were the first to initiate all-women climbs on major routes, at a time when to do them without a guide was in itself out of the ordinary.

So particular interest attaches to Mrs. Underhill's chapter on Manless Climbing. She began leading in the Dolomites, with the Dimais—Antonio didn't really approve, but ' with Angelo I could lead all I liked, just so long as we were out of sight of his father '. Then came the Grépon, Peigne, Jungfrau, Mönch (S.W. ridge), Cinque Torri, Rotengrat of the Alphubel, Tour Carrée de Roche Méane, and finally the Matterhorn—though only on her fifth trip to the Hörnli did the weather give her party its chance. But no A.C. misogynist need fear that in picking up this book he is letting himself in for a feminist tract. These manless climbs take up one chapter only ; in the other twelve there is no feminism, but a good deal of femininity, for Mrs. Underhill notices and recaptures so many of the smaller things which made up the flavour of a mountain day—food, smells, talk, states of mind and temper—which masculine narratives usually leave out.

She begins with New England and strenuous winter days on Mount Washington ; then come three splendid chapters on Dolomites, Chamonix and Oberland, which cover her greatest climbs in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties : the Spigolo of the Punta Fiammes (not a piton), the South wall of the Torre Grandi (the via Miriam), the South face of Antelao (in one day, starting from Cortina), the first traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable and of the South-east ridge of the Dreieck-

horn. It is a round that speaks as eloquently of her speed as of her skill. Two of these expeditions stand out, for drama and interest. The first is the reconnaissance and first ascent of the Aiguille de Roc, with descent down icy slabs in a thunderstorm. An electric discharge knocked her hands off the rocks, she saw climbers who weren't there, but somehow exhilaration outweighed cold and fear, and the words *Forsan et haec olim meminissa jurabit* kept floating round her head. The other was the North-east face of the Finsteraarhorn where, as on the Welligrat and the Engelhörner, she was deliberately following in Gertrude Bell's footsteps. She climbed with Adolf Rubi and a porter (who fell off when traversing a slope 300 ft. under the summit ridge). Leaving the Strahlegg hut at midnight, they reached the top at 5.30. It was the third ascent—the first without a bivouac—and ' Even today the climb remains a very unpleasant memory. It is the only climb I have ever done which I cannot think about with pleasure. Not that this was the only occasion in the mountains when I have ever been frightened, but it was the occasion when I was most badly frightened, and for the longest period. I may as well admit that I haven't the kind of courage it takes to do such climbs as that. Fun, to my mind, is the only reason for climbing mountains, and the North-east face of the Finsteraarhorn was not fun.'

The Viereselsgrat of the Dent Blanche gets a chapter to itself, possibly because it put an end to manless climbing. She did it guideless with Robert Underhill, who had been her partner on the traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable behind Armand Charlet. (' A Mr. L. Underwood (*sic*) was also along ' ended a press notice after singing Miss O'Brien's praises.) Coming off the Dent Blanche the ordinary route, they were caught by dark on the glacier and each had a different way off to recommend—his based on calculation, hers on instinct. He let her have her way, and she was right ; so she married him. But the ALPINE JOURNAL, in mentioning this guideless ascent of Miss O'Brien's, named no companion. So perhaps this is the moment to point out that she had done very well of herself, in marrying a man who in ten days in 1928 had polished off the Peuterey ridge (first time without bivouac), the Brenva ridge, and the first traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable.

After marriage, the Rockies claimed the Underhills for many seasons ; and the chapters on Idaho and Montana have a particular freshness appropriate to these little-known ranges—Swan, Beartooth, Sawtooth, Mission. Some of the rock looks very impressive in the photographs, but the main hazards came not from mountaineering, but from grizzlies, dense bush, and swamps which nearly swallowed up the packhorses. After the war the Underhills came back to Europe, to introduce their two boys to the Dolomites and Western Alps, and to renew partnership

with Adolf Rubi. I have several personal reasons for enjoying the account of their visits and, writing in the ALPINE JOURNAL, I should like to refer particularly to one. In 1955 I was at the back of a family rope descending the Tour Ronde which at one point, I am sorry to say, gave up stepping for sliding. My fury and shame at allowing myself to be plucked from my steps was considerably augmented by the presence in the couloir of three actual, and two potential, A.C. men. Now I read in Mrs. Underhill's book that two years earlier she and her two boys had shot out of their steps down that same couloir. Adolf Rubi was behind to hold them: but 'he suggested that next time, when he might well be sliding with us, we aim our course towards a large rock below, two of us passing one side, and two the other'. This is exactly what our party of four did—two one side, two the other, stop. And now that I realise that a much better climber than I has slipped in the couloir, and that we were doing exactly what Adolf Rubi prescribed, I feel immensely better about the whole affair.

JANET ADAM SMITH.

The Diaries of John Ruskin, 1835–1847. Selected and edited by Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse. O.U.P. 1956. Price 70*s*.

THIS is the first volume of three in which the diaries covering the greater part of John Ruskin's life are to be published. Little of the material has appeared before and the diary for 1842 could not even be traced by Ruskin himself when he was writing 'Praeterita'.

The diary for 1840 opens with a statement that he had determined to keep one part of it for intellect and another for feeling. As later in life Ruskin seems to have destroyed the second part or 'book of pain' as he called it, the surviving diaries are factual records and observations telling little of his emotions or of his companions.

Four visits to the Alps are recorded in this volume. In 1835 he paid his first visit to Chamonix, which was to become the focal point of his veneration for mountain scenery. The journal is much preoccupied with rocks and clouds. Daily he recorded how blue the sky was with a cyanometer, made on the model of that invented by de Saussure. The diary shows remarkably keen observation for a sixteen-year-old and includes some descriptions of considerable beauty.

In 1841 he only passed through the Alps on his way back from Italy, but in 1842 he was back at Chamonix, more interested this time in flowers than in rocks. Two years later he spent nearly two months based on Chamonix in company with Joseph Couttet. They walked energetically, Ruskin finding 'climbing a tranquil enjoyment'. 'What should I have said three years ago (if) I had been told that on June 14th 1844 I should climb without fatigue to the aiguille de Charmoz, passing over what Saussure himself mentions with the utmost dread, a glacier

covered with fresh snow?' 'To the aiguille de Charmoz' does not mean to the summit.

These alpine diaries are not likely to be of much direct interest to mountaineers, but as part of the raw material of 'Modern Painters' and as a side-light on the part Ruskin played in influencing the Victorian cult of alpine scenery they are of great interest.

PETER BICKNELL.

Snowdon Biography. By Geoffrey Winthrop Young, Geoffrey Sutton, and Wilfrid Noyce. Illus. J. M. Dent & Sons, London. 1957. 25*s*.

IT is more than thirty years since *The Mountains of Snowdonia*, by H. R. C. Carr and G. A. Lister, was published. So many developments in climbing technique, so many new possibilities for activities on the rocks have been introduced that a new volume is due, even if, as the authors admit, it is in many general aspects not more than a supplement to the older work. No one could be better fitted than Young to deal with the history of Welsh mountaineering; he has been in active touch with the climbers, if not, since the First World War, with the rock faces. Sutton represents the generation which has raised steepest the standard of climbing technique to the present highest, the Joe Brown standard. Noyce, besides an introduction that describes the lie of the land and the innumerable climbing grounds from the Tremadoc bluffs to Craig yr Ysfa, shows a wonderful knowledge of what has been written about Snowdon by writers who occasionally climbed a hill and climbers who wrote about their climbs. The three parts of the book, 'From Genesis to Numbers' by Young, 'The Greased Pole' by Sutton, 'The Writer in Snowdonia' by Noyce, naturally overlap frequently.

The phrase in the Introduction 'there remains no major outstanding rock problem' has a familiar ring, for each succeeding generation sees as major problems what were minor in a remoter view. Some wise hints are given about weather signs, but we are rightly warned there are exceptions. Personally I have found the sunshine seldom in Cwm Silyn; the east wind is not so much cloud-laden as productive of a grey, colour-destroying haze. Mrs. Jones in old days at Ogwen Cottage used to say she never hung out washing in the east wind owing to the smuts it brought from Manchester!

Mr. Young has no praise for the night ascents of Snowdon by the early visitors: 'Rude hillsides are at their worst through the hours of darkness'; but he acknowledges our debt to the pioneers 'who formulated mountaineering as a creed rather than a technique'. With the turn of the century came 'the rapturous vanity of recording first ascents'. We are given a picture of that delightful company that used

to assemble at Pen-y-Pass at Easter under his aegis ; its enjoyment of the rocks, the shacks, the baths and the songs. Even to the stars of that company, Pope, Mallory, Thomson, Herford and others, rock climbs ' were still regarded as existing lines of possibility contrived by Nature, and concealed for us to find ; . . . not inventions of our own '. After the First World War Young noted—though now from below—the rise in the standard of difficulty overcome, as he watched the experts of the 1920s on Clogwyn du'r Arddu and the Idwal Slabs, and he emphasises the growing distinction between rock-climbing and mountaineering.

Mr. Sutton deals almost entirely with the successive phases of the last thirty years, dating the beginning of modern rock-climbing to the ascent of the East Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu in 1927, and the establishment of Helyg, which, by 1930, was the centre of activity of the Climbers' Club. Fast transport and the recognition of outcrops as excellent training grounds for experts brought opportunities for acquiring skill in technique to hosts of new climbers. Sutton says : ' From 1927 to the present day nobody has made an important advance on the standard of climbing who has not trained himself by regular outcrop climbing, and it is significant of the properties of gritstone, if of nothing else, that every one of these pioneers has been a city-dweller from the towns of the gritstone area.' We are given an almost bewildering succession of names of men who have been making climbs of constantly increasing difficulty, and there are quotations from what they have written of their doings in the many regional climbers' guides and journals. In the years before the Second World War, Colin Kirkus and Menlove Edwards were great names and Young considers that the culmination of free rock-climbing was then reached. Kretschmer, who was killed with Jenkins on the Brenva in 1947, writing that same year, says : ' Some lost the Welsh hills in a maze of rock climbs. . . . A new class of pure rock climbers sprang up, imbibing their knowledge of the hills almost entirely through the guide-books and regarding the mountain setting of their sport as a more or less tiresome encumbrance.' His remark that ' rock climbing requires little specialized technique ; it is a natural pursuit that comes easily to many healthy persons ', was quickly put out of date by the experts. In 1950, according to Sutton, ' the technique of out of balance climbing came into its own and the overhang epoch began '. The ' power-to-weight ratio ' became all-important. To hope to attain anything like the Joe Brown standard ' it is no longer enough to be a rock-gymnast ' ; a man has to be ' a highly competent gymnast ' with a minimum of one day a week of practice. Streetly's account of ' one of the really hard modern climbs ', the Red Slab on Clogwyn du'r Arddu, is quite impressive. We can see reasons for the view that the future for rising standards lies with the young, certainly those below the age of discretion ! Com-

menting on the use of pitons and other artificial devices, Sutton adds : ' While there is an undoubted loss to heroism, there is a compensatory gain to common sense and pleasure.' But if climbing is limited to bluffs like Dinas Cromlech, which can be ascended from the back in a few minutes, would not a rope from above be a simpler measure of precaution !

Noyce's excellent pages on ' The Writer in Snowdonia ' will surprise many of us by the amount that has been written and the amount he himself has read. He finds apposite quotations ; from Wordsworth to express our feeling as we stand by Glaslyn below the face of Snowdon ; from Shelley to express our anticipations as we leave London for North Wales ; from Borrow as we slog along a bit of hard road. Godley in the *Climbers Club Journal*, John Hirst in *Songs of Mountains*, Young in *On High Hills* and *Mountain Craft* and many others in prose and verse and in the numerous guide-books to various climbing grounds express the pleasures of Snowdonia. Menlove Edwards provides a nice picture of an attempt to bring his courage to the sticking-point by eating sardines as he halts on a foothold on the slabs. Noyce comes to the conclusion that Sassenach writers cannot fully enter into the Welshness of Snowdonia and quite make their own ' what only the Welshman, living in his own Valleys, savouring their mist and legend, can ever fully enjoy '.

' What of the future ? ' Sutton asks ; when artificial aids are increasingly used and hydro-electric schemes developed. On the whole the book suggests a not discouraging picture. I visualise the inn at Pen-y-gwryd in the evening ; in the bar are three people. A boy (or a girl) who believes he (or she) has just made the ascent in record time of the face of the Nant Ffrancon dam, using the new suction pads for hands and feet ; a funny old fellow who has wandered over Snowdon carrying an ice-axe long enough to serve as a walking-stick ; a vigorous-looking individual of any age from first to second childhood, who has had a grand mixed day, with horizons varying from a few inches from the nose to seventy miles. And all three are agreed that Snowdonia is the very place to give them just what each one wants.

There are 16 pages of illustrations of climbers resting or the reverse and of the setting in which they climb.

R. L. G. IRVING.

On Climbing. By Charles Evans. Pp. 191. Illus. Museum Press, London. 1956. Price 30*s*.

THERE are three kinds of books on mountaineering technique : the straight text-book ; the book which is a mixture of technique and personal descriptions of climbs to illustrate and provide backgrounds to the techniques ; and mountaincraft. The last is concerned more with

the psychological approach and in so far as it deals with this it is never likely to be dated. The first, which is done so well by the French and Americans with their wealth of technical jargon, is suited to the enthusiast, but as techniques change they become dated. The middle category is concerned in the main with the approach to mountains and mountaineering and therefore the techniques involved are the basic techniques. Such books carry a great responsibility because their greatest influence is on the beginner and it is fundamentally important that his approach should be correct, with a clear appreciation of the dangers and the techniques used to minimise them. Nor should they lose sight of the pleasures of climbing—and of good technique. An excellent example of such a book is Colin Kirkus's *Let's Go Climbing*, and Charles Evans' new book is a worthy successor.

The layout of the book follows the normal pattern : beginnings, equipment, rock climbing, snow, ice and glaciers, and illustrative chapters on climbs in Wales, the Alps and the Himalayas. There is a separate chapter on the rope. It is an excellent chapter, not so much for the simple techniques which are clearly described but because of the way in which it emphasises the fundamental importance of the rope and of good rope technique. (But I was rather alarmed to notice the author in one of the illustrations using a duralumin karabiner as a waist attachment.) Artificial climbing is only mentioned in a general way, as is proper in a book of this nature. The few words he has to say are wise, although I would insert the word ' should ', for accuracy's sake, in his last sentence that artificial climbing only starts when the hardest of free climbing has failed to force a way !

The chapter on rock climbing is straightforward and starts the beginner off on the correct lines.

The first of the chapters on snow and ice begins with crampons and not the axe. This is unusual but, with modern rubber-soled boots, I think, correct, for it is most important to emphasise that the good snow and ice climber does very little step-cutting today and that while the axe and crampons are both essential, the former is the accessory. But as he says, crampons demand a special skill and their use must be thoroughly mastered. I wonder how many beginners spend a morning or two practising crampon technique on a glacier snout, and, indeed, there are many otherwise competent mountaineers who would gain considerably by a few hours of thoughtful practice. There is a tendency in text-books for the reader to get the impression that an ice step is fashioned as a work of art, clean and regular and sloping in ; in the Himalayas, where steps are to be used several times, or in the Alps where slopes are very steep, this is correct, but for normal purposes this kind of step is far too time-consuming to produce ; all that one should aim to do is to produce a rough gouge which one can stand in

comfortably in crampons. But the author does emphasise one small but important point : ' cut as if you meant it '.

In the last three chapters on Climbs and Walks in Wales, a traverse of the Täschhorn-Dom, and some Himalayan travel, Evans is at his best. These accounts, whether of small or big mountains, transmit his enthusiasm, and the pleasures, drudgeries and trivia of a trip in the hills which in total gives a fine impression of what climbing is really like and which is therefore of much value to the beginner. This, indeed, is how I would summarise the book : it will set the beginner off with the right techniques and attitudes. Where one disagrees it is mainly on small points of technique (e.g. figure 64 shows a climber belaying with his axe in snow, with the axe several feet to one side of him) ; and contrarily, there are many points that I found myself underlying with complete agreement. If the book has a weak patch it is in relation to the Alps. I would have liked to have seen a chapter devoted to the special problems the Alps presents to the guideless novice (in the Alps) who is already experienced in Britain ; on the importance of speed in the Alps and how to attain it (something in which British climbers tend to be deficient in mixed routes), and on route-finding, perhaps like the famous chapter on the Beispielspitz in Badminton. For in some ways, the jump from Britain to the Alps is bigger and more serious than that of either starting to climb or on going to the Himalayas. The Alpine discipline and dangers are in many ways quite different from those of British climbing and the differences are not always obvious.

Charles Evans' sketches are for the most part clear and concise, supplemented by some thirty-two photographs in which Douglas Milner's hand is unmistakable. The blocks are good, the illustrative ones *are* illustrative and some of the general ones are very fine—many even combine both qualities. *On Climbing* costs thirty shillings : this is unfortunate because it will tend to put it out of the reach of the people who will gain most from it, but even at this price they should try to acquire it, because it will start them off climbing with the right approach.

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

White Fury. By Raymond Lambert and Claude Kogan. Translated from the French by Showell Styles. Pp. 176, 47 photos, 1 map. Hurst & Blackett, London. 1956. Price 18*s*.

IN the autumn of 1954, Lambert reconnoitred Gaurisankar with a Franco-Swiss team of five. He approached eastwards from Katmandu, north by the Bhote Kosi, and so to Beding in the Rolwaling Khola, whence he crossed an 18,000-ft. pass to the Menlung Chu. In late September, two long-distance reconnaissances were made of Gaurisankar's South, East, and North ridges. These were seen to be either long thin blades bearing double cornices, or, where broader, cleft by

enormous gaps and studded with ice-towers. The faces between were reckoned unclimbable. Decision was therefore taken to attempt Cho Oyu, despite the known presence there of Dr. Tichy's Austrian party. To this end, Lambert crossed the Menlung La and the Nangpa La. His attempt on Cho Oyu went by the West face, the easiest on any Eight Thousander (*A.J.* 58. 450.). He and Mme. Kogan were stopped at 26,500 ft. by bad weather—hence the book's title. Since they had carried with them from Katmandu no less than thirty-five quarts of whisky, the storm must have been terrible indeed—or the whisky not Scotch ?

The book as a literary work reveals a most successful experiment in padding. The authors lack material for a book-length work, for they are not in possession of the creative imagination or perception to draw out and develop the boundless possibilities latent within their brief adventure. Instead, they write two or three chapters turn and turn about, overlapping the narrative, so that each tells again part of the preceding writer's story. Since each succeeds in presenting different aspects of the joint enterprise, the repetition, far from palling, adds to our interest. The transfer of pen from one to another is done with a dexterity well worthy of study by authors likely to find themselves in a similar predicament.

Several features of the story call for adverse comment, first and foremost the deliberate gate-crashing of Cho Oyu by the very face on which Dr. Tichy was climbing. Lambert's defeat does not (in the reviewer's opinion) mitigate his offence to human relationships. The intervention drew from Pasang Dawa Lama—Tichy's sirdar—one of the most remarkable physical feats ever recorded in the Himalaya—the ascent of Cho Oyu (26,750 ft.) in three days from Namche Bazar. He was powered by anger. Had the intervention occurred in 1952, perhaps the mountain's history might have been different.

Mme. Kogan claims for herself the second crossing of the Menlung La. The second crossing was in fact made by the reviewer with Tom Bourdillon in 1951, and further crossings followed in 1952. For this and other errors, Mme. Kogan makes recompense by offering, on p. 84, a most excellent thumb-nail sketch of true love in action.

The writing is marred by inconsistencies of thought and feeling. In Chapters 22 and 23, when Lambert denigrates his companions, his uncharitable feelings compare ill with his generous words in Chapter 1 : ' We were one entity, a team, and from the date of our starting out our individualities were merged to form a collective soul—the soul of the expedition.' Denigration may be viewed by some as commendable openness, but in light of it the collective-soul declaration appears too gross an insincerity. Likewise, Mme. Kogan on Cho Oyu quotes, ' Keep me, O Lord, from happiness too easily attained.' But when the

Lord a week later takes her at her word, she is resentful. They go down, she says, bruised in pride, and, referring to the lost summit, speaks of the ' bitterness of our failure to conquer it'. On the next page she declares, ' We have lived as intensely as man can live.' That is a very great claim indeed—cause surely for deep and abiding satisfaction. But almost in the next breath she says with more truth than perspicacity, ' The best and most valuable gift this attempt had brought us was the feeling of dissatisfaction, the desire for revenge. . . . '

The translation is well done, but is sometimes too literal for ease of understanding. One sentence reads, ' Our eyes were so much bigger than our stomachs that we sometimes mistook the latter for marmots ! '

Our ears seem to catch, from that distant valley, the bark of a shaggy dog.

W. H. MURRAY.

Lawinen : Abenteuer und Erfahrung, Erlebnis und Lehre. By Walther Flaig. F. A. Brockhaus, Wiesbaden. 1955. 251 pages, text-figures, 82 plates. Price DM. 16.50.

THIS is the second edition of a work published in 1935. Much of it has been rewritten and brought up to date. It commences with a chapter on some recent avalanche catastrophes, and then rather surprisingly, jumps back in the next chapter to disasters of the Middle Ages. There follows a chapter dealing with snow, its metamorphoses and other influences—weather, terrain and the like—causing instability of the snow cover ; it finishes with a classification of the avalanche types, of which more below.

A chapter is devoted to the experiences of the author and others in the mountains and the lessons to be learnt therefrom ; there can be few mountaineers living who are better qualified than Herr Flaig to deal with this subject. The last chapter describes modern methods of protection of communications and buildings and of rescue work in the mountains.

An important feature of the work is a table inset at the end of the book, elaborating a section of the earlier chapter mentioned above, showing every conceivable type of snow—wild snow, powder snow, firn, wind-pack, etc., etc.—a score of them are listed—and the form of avalanche each could cause, depending upon whether the weather conditions have been dry, wet or slab-forming (by wind). This is the best way of warning the mountaingoer who, before planning a tour or an ascent, needs to know what the recent weather conditions have been and what their effect is likely to have upon the snow cover. This seems a simpler if older-fashioned method for the skier or mountaineer than the recently proposed classification of Haefeli and de Quervain published in *Die Alpen*, vol. 81, March–April 1955, p. 75, a note on which the

reviewer is publishing in the *Journal of Glaciology*. The latter classification is perhaps more scientifically accurate and certainly more useful to the civil engineer for the building of permanent avalanche defences, but it is based on *post-factum* evidence—the nature of the scar, whether the avalanche has come down along the ground or risen into the air, etc., but the tourist and the mountaineer need prognosis, not diagnosis.

In one respect I cannot agree with Herr Flaig on the causes he gives for the wind-packing of snow. He continues to favour the very old idea that the slabs have been formed by wind-pressure. As I have pointed out (*Snow Structure and Ski Fields*, Macmillan, 1936, p. 182), a 27-m.p.h. wind exerts a pressure of only 0·015 lb. per square inch, whereas a single ski bearing half the weight of a medium-sized man exerts a pressure of 0·6 lb. per square inch and does not compress the snow to nearly the hardness of wind-slab. The causes of wind-packing are quite different and have been dealt with in the work cited.

The book is excellently illustrated, the quality of the illustrations being far better than in the first edition. It certainly gives the best impression of avalanche danger and avoidance that has appeared for a long time.

G. SELIGMAN.

La Strada è questa. By A. Balliano and I. Affrentranger. Pp. 195. Alfa Editions. 1956.

MOUNTAINEERING literature is large. It is also, the authors of *La Strada è questa* comment sadly, largely factual. It is the account of bigger and better climbs. This Italian book therefore sets out to be an approach to the spiritual in mountains, through the medium of a number of mountaineering Roman Catholic priests and of their home, the Val d'Aosta.

It might seem that such a collection has no more unity of motive than, say, an assemblage of mountaineering bricklayers or bank clerks. But it has. The link is given in the exclamation of Achille Ratti (later Pope Pius XI), benighted near the summit of the Dufourspitze at over 15,000 ft : ' Who would have slept in that pure air ? . . . We felt ourselves to be in the presence of a novel and most imposing revelation of the omnipotence and majesty of God.' There is in the mountains a deep sense of mystery, followed by a sense of shared revelation, which has driven these long-robed priests, through discomfort and labour, to take a part in their exploration and to sing their praises.

We read, then, of that first ascent of Mont Velan by Abate Murith ; of the feats of Abate Gorret, one of the foremost protagonists in the struggle for the Matterhorn from the Italian side ; of the ' Pader Curius ' and the poet of the flowers (P. Chanoux) ; of Abate Henry, foremost explorer of the Valpelline, and of Achille Ratti traversing Monte Rosa to Zermatt in 1889 and benighted twice ; of Abate

Chamonin, who sang the Te Deum on Monte Rosa, and Abate Bonin, who celebrated mass at the summit of Mont Blanc in 1890.

To the non-Catholic the last two acts may seem inappropriate. But they are in keeping both with the tradition and with that sense of awe which strikes upon us, all too seldom, before the mountain majesty. In an age which prizes achievement it is pleasant to find oneself in a company which lifts up its eyes to the hills for other purposes than to reckon whether they are Grade Five or Six.

WILFRID NOYCE.

The Conquest of FitzRoy. By M. A. Azéma. Translated by Katherine Chorley and Nea Morin. Pp. 237. Illus. André Deutsch Ltd., London. 1957. 21*s*.

THE French edition of Dr. Azéma's book was reviewed in *A.J.* 59. 467–71, and a hope was expressed then that an English translation would appear of this very remarkable expedition. This has now appeared, and very welcome it will be to all interested in Andean mountaineering, now much in vogue. The names of the translators are a guarantee of the competence of their work. It is unnecessary to review the book again ; it is sufficient to commend it.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Six Great Mountaineers. By Ronald W. Clarke. Pp. 203. Illus. Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., London. 1956. 10*s*. 6*d*.

THIS volume is one of a series of ' Six Great ' people of diverse types, and is presumably intended for boys and girls. The six mountaineers chosen by Mr. Clark are Whymper, Mummery, Collie, Mallory, Winthrop Young and John Hunt. The first two are so well worked over that it would be hard to produce much that was novel ; and in the case of the two last, a writer is always under a disadvantage in writing of living people. The account of Collie would appear to make use of some new material. There are occasional inaccuracies in the book, but in a work of this type, intended to stimulate interest and not to be used as a biographical source-book, such slips do not really matter.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

La Montagne. By Maurice Herzog and others. Pp. 476. Illus. Librairie Larousse, Paris. 1956.

THIS encyclopædic work supplements *Les Alpinistes Célèbres*, reviewed in our last number. The later volume deals less with individuals than with the history and techniques associated with mountains and mountaineering. There are chapters on literature, music, painting, the cinema, legends (Scheuchzer's dragons are matched by Walt Disney's gnomes), in their various associations with mountains. The illustrations

are excellent. Much thought and care has been taken by the compilers and the synopses are genuinely synoptic. French appreciation of English literature is notoriously erratic, but this book is remarkably sound except on the latest period which has curious omissions and inclusions, possibly largely due to the rather random selection of books that have been translated into French. Some of the compilers suffer, as do so many French writers, from the widespread belief that British climbing practically ceased in 1914. It seems that the splendid flowering of mountaineering in France which followed the foundation of the G.H.M. blinded them to less spectacular progress elsewhere.

This delusion of British decadence between the wars is sufficiently widespread to compel us to deviate from our review to recite a few facts that may lead to a better perspective.

The salient features of mountaineering between the wars may fairly be said to be associated with (i) Himalayan climbing, (ii) the Mont Blanc massif, and (iii) ' North faces '. As regards the first, even allowing for the great feats of German, Austrian and Swiss climbers (Kangchenjunga, Nanga Parbat, Siniolchu, Simvu, Dunagiri are only a few names that occur to one), it is not too much to say that, in the Himalayas, the British were well in the lead throughout these two decades—one has only to glance over M. Marcel Kurz's list in *Berge der Welt*, V, pp. 204–10, to see it. Even the Americans, busy though they were with the wide, unexplored areas open to them in their own continent in the Rockies, Coast Range and Alaska/Yukon, found time for four Asiatic expeditions (Minya Konka, Nanda Devi and twice to K2). The French were virtually not then in this field ; a single expedition to Hidden Peak in 1936, two years after Dyhrenfurth's visit to the same region.

And what of the Alps ? As regards North faces, we all agree that British climbers did not function. The Germans and Italians were in the lead ; following some notable North-face climbs on the Dent d'Hérens and elsewhere in the 1920's, in which Welzenbach's name particularly occurs, the Schmid brothers set the fashion in real earnest on the Matterhorn in 1931 (and Signor Benedetti quickly saw to it that the South and East faces of the mountain went to Italian climbers), and neither of the two routes on the Grandes Jorasses or on the Eiger, nor Piz Badile nor Cima Grande di Lavaredo, fell to the French. But the French secured the Dru—after the Swiss had descended it three years earlier.

As for Mont Blanc, British climbers were involved in :

First ascent of the Innominata arête	1919
First crossing of the Col de Bionnassay . . .	1919
Second ascent of Mont Blanc by Eccles' route . .	1921

First ascent of the ' Sentinelle ' route	1927
First ascent of the Route Major	1928
First ascent of the Via della Pera	1933

The foregoing is but a selection of fine climbs ; for example, none of Mr. Eustace Thomas's meteoric performances in 1928 is included.

French activity showed itself primarily in the Chamonix aiguilles (for example, North face of the Plan, 1924 ; Verte by the arête des Grands Montets, 1925) ; but even here, on their own doorstep, they did not have things all their own way. Mallory and Porter had been at work in 1919 ; the first guideless ascent of the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon (1923, three years before any French *guide* made the climb) and the second ascent (first guideless) of the Ryan-Lochmatter ridge of the Plan (1927), went to British parties ; and one has only to think of the activities of Miss Fitzgerald, or Miss O'Brien, or Signor Rivetti, or Mr. Underhill, in the Mont Blanc group, to realise that the French had plenty of competition on their own ground.

That the G.H.M. gave a great fillip to French mountaineering, and that its influence was felt across the Channel, no-one will deny ; but it is only fair to British climbing to point out that if the free-rock climbing in our home hills had secured as good a continental Press as the climbing activities of the French had through the medium of *Alpinisme* and similar journals, it is certain that French critics of British mountaineering skill would have recognised that our standards were not inferior to their own, though our mountains were smaller. This, indeed, is shown by the ease with which our home-trained climbers have taken to Alpine rock climbs when the disabilities of time, distance and currency permit.

Primarily, in the inter-war period it is the parochialism of French climbing that strikes one ; whilst Americans, Austrians, Germans, Swiss, British were launching out into greater fields of endeavour, the French stuck largely to their home mountains round Chamonix or La Bérarde. It is, indeed, gratifying that since the last war there has been a marked insurgence of French mountaineering further afield, particularly in the Himalayas and the Andes. And that the Continent has learned something from the British is shown by the careful preparation and unblemished success of M. Franco on Makalu (1955) or the Swiss on Lhotse and Everest (1956), both following British methods, as compared with the suffering and tragedies that marred some earlier expeditions.

The outstanding achievements of Continental climbers are not confined to any one nation ; nevertheless, even by comparison with their records there are no grounds today, nor indeed at any time, for British mountaineering to hang its head.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage. By Hermann Buhl. (Translated by Hugh Merrick.) Pp. 360. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 1956. 25*s*.

THIS work, in its German dress, was reviewed in these pages by Mr. Porter in 1955 (*A.J.* 60. 185) and little remains to be done but to commend this translation of a book that will always hold its place in any good Alpine library. Mr. Merrick has done his work well and retains the vivid nature of the original.

The book excites some comparison with Gaston Rébuffat's recent volume, *Starlight and Storm*, in so far as North faces are common to both. But Buhl's story is that of his whole climbing life, and accordingly there is much greater variety in his pages, though he does not write with quite the *élan* of his French rival. Both agree in putting the Eigerwand at the top of their list of great Alpine ascents.

Buhl has certainly been fortunate not to have killed himself several times, despite all his skill and hardihood. But the best luck tends to go to the best parties, and it is unlikely that anyone who had not devoted himself untiringly to training for the hardest tests the mountains could oppose to him, would have succeeded as Buhl did in his phenomenal ascent of Nanga Parbat.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Handles of Chance. By Nicholas Wollaston. Pp. 256. Illus. Jonathan Cape, London. 1956. 24*s*.

THIS is a delightful book to read, though it does not deal much with mountaineering. What there is of this last is good; Mr. Wollaston and his friend, Robin Platts, had little money and not much climbing experience; and their time was short. Sensibly, they picked on Lahul to climb in and enjoyed themselves; and anyone who has travelled in the lesser Himalayas will enjoy Mr. Wollaston's record of their adventures.

But the core of the book is his sightseeing in India, Goa, Swat and Western Pakistan. Train travel in India in one of the lower classes has its rewards as well as its penalties, and the reader can enjoy both vicariously at Mr. Wollaston's hands. He liked India; was patient enough not to be worried by the hindrances he experienced; young enough not to be upset physically by any hardships undergone. Balked of his wish to journey back to England through Afghanistan, he chose to go through Baluchistan and Persia. The latter country displeased him, except for the Kurds he encountered. Persian officialdom shook even his urbanity and by the time he reached Turkey he was evidently tired of travel. His readers, however, will hope that Mr. Wollaston will set out on further journeys—and record them equally well.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Hochgebirgsführer durch die Berner Alpen. Vol. IV (3rd edition). Petersgrat-Finsteraarjoch-Unteres Studerjoch-Galmilücke. S.A.C. Section Bern. Pp. 182. 48 outline sketches. A. Francke A.G. Bern. 1956. Price 11 frs. 60 cts.

MORE than twenty-five years ago the second edition of this guide was reviewed in the ALPINE JOURNAL, and it can be said of the third edition, as it was of its predecessor, that the ' volume is as near perfection as possible '.

We regret the omission of almost all historical particulars about the many routes described, but this is due to the necessity of limiting the size of the book. All unessential information has had to be cut out, but if space could be found to record the date of the first ascent of the Mittellegi ridge of the Eiger, mention might well have been made also of the fact that it had been descended (by von Kuffner) thirty-six years earlier.

References to the ALPINE JOURNAL are sometimes given to the year of publication instead of to the number of the volume ; sometimes both date and volume number are given, a method which has led to at least one unfortunate combination (p. 49). These, however, are very trifling criticisms and in no way detract from the general excellence of the book.

The Galmilücke area, which in the old editions was in Vol. III, has now been included in this volume. Another change is that the sketches, instead of being interspersed throughout the book, are grouped together at the end. They are, as usual, excellent ; all are full-page drawings and of remarkable clarity. The Jungfrau is particularly well covered, being drawn from five different aspects.

With the appearance of this volume the revision of the *Berner Alpen* is complete, and warmest congratulations are due to all who took part in the work.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

Alpine Ski Tour. By Robin Fedden. Pp. 93, with 24 plates. Putnam & Co. Ltd. Price 30*s*.

SKI-ING on the popular runs in the Alps has become such a crowded affair that the danger of being run down by a fellow ski-er is much greater than the risk of being hurt by an avalanche or by falling into a crevasse. So few people venture nowadays away from the cable railways and ski-lifts that it is a pleasure to see a book published dealing with ski-mountaineering on the lonely glaciers extending from the French Alps to the Valais.

In *Alpine Ski Tour* Robin Fedden gives 'An Account of the High Level Route ' from Chamonix to Saas, and a very vivid account it is. With the writer and his two friends we experience the toil of the long,

tedious ascents with rather heavy rucksacks. Reading his list of equipment I wonder if I should not prefer to be a little less prepared for any and every possibility and, rather, carry some lighter weights.

The programme of the party is rather ambitious. It includes, in April, the Aiguille du Chardonnet. The attempt is nearly successful, but for a dramatic incident which forces the climbers to turn back just below the summit. Yet another incident will interest the mountaineer : the involuntary, quick descent from a steep col on skis where crampons would have been more suitable.

The ski-ers have to battle with cold, wind and difficult snow and weather conditions. Only once or twice we read of those highlights of Alpine ski-touring, the effortless runs on feather-light powder snow, down untouched glaciers.

The many variations of the ' Haute Route ' are discussed with sound judgment and shown on a very clear sketch. These route descriptions and the chapter about equipment will be of great value to anyone intending to do the ' Haute Route '.

There is a wealth of historic fact reported in the book, local history and mountaineering history alike, more perhaps than one would expect to find in a description of an Alpine tour.

The photographs are of a high quality and well selected. Most of them are taken by a member of the party, Mr. A. Costa, a few by A. Roch and two by B. R. Goodfellow. The photographic reproduction is first class. To read the book is a delight ; it shows the Alps in a season when not so many ski-ers and still less climbers know them.

W. KIRSTEIN.

Land and Crop of Nepal Himalaya. Edited by H. Kihara. Vol. II. Pp. xvii, 529. Illustrations. Printed by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, on behalf of the Fauna and Flora Research Society of Kyoto University. 1956.

THE first volume of scientific results of the Japanese Expeditions to Nepal in 1952 and 1953 was noticed in *A.J.* 61. 228, and it is not necessary to do more than commend the second volume to the attention of the specialists for whom it is intended. The book opens with two substantial chapters on ' Vegetation ' and ' Crop Zone ', both by J. Kawakita, of the Institute of Geography, Osaka University, and it deals thereafter mainly with cultivated crops such as oats, wheat, barley, rice, cucumbers and the like. The longest study is at the end, on ' Characteristics of Oriental Maize ', running to over 150 pages. In general, the work is one for professional students of horticulture and plant genetics and will doubtless be of great interest to scientists who visit Nepal in the future.

Kangchenjunga, The Untrodden Peak. By Charles Evans. Pp. 187. Illus. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 1956. Price 25*s*.

THIS is a book essentially by a mountaineer for mountaineers. As the official account of one of the greatest mountaineering achievements in the history of climbing, it is not only a very important document, but also faultless in its preparation and well illustrated. The impression is of high-altitude technique brought to perfection and unerringly applied.

To appreciate from the leader's (Dr. Evans) modest account the magnitude of the achievement, and the sheer skill and determination which made success possible, it is necessary to read between the lines, with some knowledge of climbing as a sport, as well as of the hardships and dangers of climbing at great heights. For, to the lay-reader, the climb must appear uneventful, even easy. The whole undertaking was too expertly planned and executed to be productive of adventures and desperate situations. Kangchenjunga has been essayed many times in the past fifty years, so the double ascent in 1955 at the first attempt by an almost entirely new approach, is a classic achievement. On all sides for the first 6,000 to 7,000 ft., between soaring rock faces, the mountain is festooned with ice-falls, steep névé and avalanche slopes, which form a belt of truly enormous defences set at a formidable altitude and protect the upper snow slopes and steep rocks near the top. It is the successful penetration of this dangerous belt of defences, in limited time, which must always call for great mountain craft and is the special problem of the climbing of Kangchenjunga. Above this belt, there remain all the problems of high climbing and a final test of difficult rock to the summit cone.

Before the days of high-altitude mountaineering, it was once suggested by an early writer that Kangchenjunga appeared to be climbable from its West side, but that it might be advisable to take a wrap in case of a night out ! Ideas have changed since then and the mountain has come to be recognised as one of the most difficult in the world and one of the most dangerous. In fact, 'Kanch' has acquired an almost fiendish reputation for bombardment with stones and avalanches of those who have dared its defences. This reputation has grown to the point where more than one expedition after considering it carefully has decided against attempting it and gone elsewhere. The summit was almost regarded as impregnable, but Evans and his colleagues have dispelled that idea at one master-stroke; they surmounted all the difficulties and left only the final white cone of snow untrodden.

The climbing of Kangchenjunga was in a sense the culmination of the joint efforts of the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society over a span of thirty years in the Mount Everest region. One tended to say ' at last Everest has been climbed—but there is still Kangchenjunga '.

Technically more difficult and comparable in height, it required all the experience accumulated on Mount Everest for an ascent to be a possibility. Thus, it is a fortunate outcome that the enterprise of its organisers instigated by Sir John Hunt, financed from the Everest Foundation and sent out under the patronage of Prince Philip, should have completed the task. The primary purpose of the expedition was to find a solution to the problem of climbing Kangchenjunga, but while it was equipped to take advantage of the opportunity for a ' go ' at the summit, a successful ascent first time was scarcely expected, and the Kangchenjunga committee had it in mind to send a further expedition in the following year.

There was a happy compromise in the decision to leave the actual summit cone untouched, in deference to the feelings of the Maharajah of Sikkim and his people. May it always remain so. Much credit is due to H.H. The Maharajah and his advisers in their acceptance of the parole given by Charles Evans and allowing the expedition to proceed. To the Sikkimese, Kangchenjunga is more than a mountain. It dominates the entire country. Its name, ' The Five Treasures of Great Snow ', symbolises much of the mystic attitude to the snowy mountains which look down on their own monastic way of life. Doubtless their request that the final peak must be left unclimbed will, in their minds, have pacified the demons of Kangchenjunga and saved the party from destruction.

The book, with its vivid account, and detailed descriptions and diagrams of the route, gives us a valuable record of how the job was done. The route, based on observations made by Kempe from Kabru, was almost entirely virgin ground and Evans in his account unfolds it stage by stage in fifteen chapters. Like the manner in which he attacked the task itself, there are no digressions—each chapter concentrates on and spotlights in detail the upward progress of the expedition from one stage to the next. The style is brief, very readable and modest to a fault. On the rare occasions when our author pauses to paint a picture in its true colours, he shows considerable talent as a writer and one's only regret is that, being a factual account, he firmly excludes most of the personal and aesthetic side of his experiences.

Perhaps the most thrilling part of the story is the account of the discovery by Hardie and Band of the snow gulley which affords the only practicable route off the western buttress on to the top of the lower ice-fall. This gulley seems to be the key to the whole route up the South-west face. There is a good description of the delicate climbing from Kempe's buttress into the broken and heavily crevassed upper reaches of the lower ice-fall. This fine piece of reconnaissance disclosed the existence of the snow gulley, and Evans showed judgment and leadership in forming his decision at once to concentrate the whole

energies of the expedition on reaching this gulley from the other side of the West Buttress. From this moment, the building of the route and line of camps up to the Great Shelf and beyond was conducted with great skill, and determination.

The book is illustrated with some excellent photographs. The colour pictures are so realistic that it is a pity that all the photographs could not be in colour. In spite of the fact that photographs taken during the serious business of a climb can seldom give adequate impressions of scale and gradients, the pictures are very impressive, and show that the ice obstacles, séracs and crevasses, are on a very large scale indeed, calling for experience and judgment to allow for the movement of such huge masses of snow and ice. The aerial photographs by the Indian Air Force are magnificent and must have helped considerably in working out the route, even if they appal in showing what a terrific mountain Kangchenjunga is.

Of interest are the notes and appendices on the use of oxygen and details of the latest type of equipment.

Altogether, Charles Evans has produced a most readable and important contribution to the literature of climbing.

C. R. COOKE.

A Picture History of Mountaineering. By R. W. Clark. 8½ in. × 11½ in. 350 Illus. The Hulton Press, London. Price 30*s*.

MR. CLARK is to be congratulated in gathering into one volume such a varied and interesting collection of pictures. He begins with Mont Aiguille and the mediaeval climbers, and ends with training courses in North Wales. Between the two he has taken in the early history of all districts, the various Himalayan stages, and much of our own home climbing. Many of the pictures are to be found either in the ALPINE JOURNAL or in well-known mountain books, but there are several exceptions. A studio group, roped up at short intervals, is among the more amusing early Victorian plates (No. 99). Plate 138 of Slingsby in camp, has been contributed by his daughter, Mrs. G. W. Young. A group of early American travellers is interesting (Plates 157–9). The classic Abraham pictures of Britain are here in full measure; there are also a goodly group of Smythes, and several Sellas.

On the whole, a well-printed volume, though several blocks of pictures known to us do not seem to have turned out very clear. For example, No. 248, Smythe's very fine photograph of the Peuterey from the Tour Ronde, and No. 250, by Basil Goodfellow, from the same viewpoint.

C. DOUGLAS MILNER.

An Artist Among Mountains. By Victor Coverley-Price. Pp. 231. Illus. Robert Hale, Ltd., London. 1957. 21*s.*

THERE can be few, if any, professions more conducive to familiarity with the mountains of the world than that of a successful diplomat. When his opportunities are reinforced by an innate love of mountains and all their associations together with the ability to depict them with masterly skill with brush and pencil, then the diplomat is indeed a fortunate man.

Mr. Coverley-Price's book is not a conventional book of mountain adventure. It contains little or nothing of first ascents or fierce new routes : in fact the most exacting tests of his courage and resourcefulness occurred in a nightmare motor drive across Mexico and during the descent of a fearsome river-gorge in the Peruvian Andes, in the course of which Professor Gregory lost his life and the author was lucky to escape with his. He has a flair for vivid description, e.g. the picture of a storm at night in ten lines (p. 92) or of the mountains of British Columbia, ' A compact archipelago of lofty islands in a turbulent ocean of conifers '. He has much of interest to tell of his official life and contacts in many countries, but as his title implies the main theme is his art and its development over three decades. The public has long been familiar with his work from his illustrations of mountain adventure in the *Sphere*, and has admired the vigour and accuracy of his drawing. To illustrate his book he has chosen thirty-three out of many hundreds of his sketches with a wide variety of interest, many of them little masterpieces despite their reduction in size. They prove in practice his contention that ' the artist can make his picture convey something of his own feeling towards the landscape, and if he is also a mountaineer, he can make his mountains look climbable and even inspire others with a desire to climb them '. This is a rare and enviable gift.

H. E. L. PORTER.

MOUNTAINEERING JOURNALS OF 1956

Die Alpen. JANUARY. ' Der Ararat ' : by Ed. Imhof. ' Une tentative d'ascension au Mönch en 1855 ' : by L. Seylaz (the attempt of Countess Dora d'Istria).

FEBRUARY. ' Badile, arête nord ' : by M. Brandt. ' Randonée en Corse ' : by C-M. Briquet. ' Der Berg Ida auf Kreta ' : by K. Lukan. ' Fjord und Alpenflug im hohen Norden ' : by E. Brunner.

MARCH. ' Wesen und Wirkung der Staublawine ' : by E. Gerber & A. Rohrer. ' Bergwanderung in Marokko ' : by W. Maurer. ' Comment les Esquimaux construisent un iglou ' : by Colin Wyatt. ' L'adresse du skieur ' : by O. Merlin.

APRIL. ' Himalaya–Chronik 1955 ' and ' Die Internationale Himalaya-Expedition 1955 ' : by G. O. Dyhrenfurth. ' Die fränzosisch-schweizerische Ganesh-Himal-Expedition (August 1955) ' : by Raymond Lambert. 'A travers le Nepal ' : by P. Vittoz.

MAY. ' Das Gebirge Nepals ' : by T. Hagen (continued in the June, July, and November issues). ' Les relations du Pays de Vaud avec Chamonix à la fin du 18^{e} siècle ' : by L. Seylaz (concluded in the June issue). This number also contains a list of the new ascents in the Swiss Alps in 1953–55.

JUNE. ' Une traversée hivernale du Mont Blanc ' : by E. Meier. ' Triglav und Jalovec ' : by W. Uttendoppler.

JULY. ' Einsamer Weg : Passo di Nara ' : by W. Meyer. ' Osterreichische Alaska-Kundfahrt 1955 ' : by H. Gsellmann. ' Nouveaux crampons à pointes profilées en étoile ' : by Adrien Voillat. ' L'autre son de cloche ' : (Hans Jaun's account, from Dollfus-Ausset's ' Matériaux ', vol. 5, of Countess Dora d'Istria's attempt on the Mönch).

AUGUST. ' Les variations des glaciers Suisses en 1955 ' : by A. Renaud. ' Das Val di Lodrino ' : by M. Koenig. ' Heiteres und Ernstes aus der Bergsteiger Zeit ' : by H. Gertsch.

SEPTEMBER. ' Eine Triglav Besteigung ' : by D. Bodmer. ' Civetta Tage ' : by W. Fleischmann. ' Kletterfahrten des S.A.C. nach Korsika, 1954 ' : by W. Schwab. ' Berühmte Kletterstellen in den Dolomiten ' : by K. Lukan. ' Une saison de faces glacières (1955) ' : by Adrien Voillat (concluded in the October issue). ' L'arête ouest de l'Alphubel ' : by A. Visoni.

OCTOBER. ' Angst und Furcht als subjektive Gefahren momente im Bergsteigen ' : by K. Greitbauer. ' Pico de Teyde (Tenerife) ' : by W. Sievers. ' Das Bündner Gotthardhaus ' : by W. Th. Höhn.

NOVEMBER. ' Nelle alte Ande inesplorate del sud Peru ' : by P. Ghiglione. ' Le Gouffre du Chevrier ' : by A. Vieceli.

DECEMBER. ' Une ascension a l'Oldenhorn en 1843 ' : (M. Louis

Seylaz is unable to identify the writer of this the earliest account to be published of an ascent of the Oldenhorn, and suggests he may have been a student of Lausanne.) ' La vie du chocard des Alpes ' : by A. Schifferli. ' Von Hvalfjord nach Thingvellir (Island) ' : by H. Nünlist. ' Hochtourenwoche Oisans 1955 ' : by D. Mattenberger.

La Montagne et Alpinisme. FEBRUARY. ' Sommes-nous fous ? That is the question ' : thus Philippe Cornuau opens his account of the first ascent of the North face of Les Droites, an expedition which necessitated five bivouacs.

A high level route for skiers from Promontogno to Pontresina is described by Maurice Martin, and Wolfgang Diehl writes about ascents and explorations in north-east Greenland.

APRIL. One of the few remaining problems of the Alps was solved in August 1955, when the 700-m.-high West face of the Petites Jorasses was climbed for the first time by Pierre Labrunie, Marcel Bron, and André Contamine, who relates the story of the ascent.

The attractions of ski-ing in the mountains of Dauphiné are described by André Georges ; his article should tempt British skiers to visit the district in spring.

Pierre Bordet relates his experiences after the ascent of Makalu when he found, on one of the Barun cols, tracks in the snow which his Sherpa companion assured him were Yeti tracks. The article contains a summary of the information available about the Yeti. The possibility that the creature may be neither bear nor monkey is intriguing.

JUNE. ' Retour vers les Alpes ' by Ted Wrangham has already been reviewed in this JOURNAL.[1] Bertrand Kempf gives a vivid account of an attempted journey from the Col de la Seigne to the Col de Balme, a complete traverse of the frontier arête of the Mont Blanc massif. This ambitious plan, evidently inspired by similar Russian achievements in the Caucasus, was cut short by the weather and was abandoned at the Refuge de Leschaux after Kempf and his companion had been imprisoned in their tent by bad weather for four days and nights on the Col des Hirondelles. Fortunately, arrangements had been made for a dump of provisions to be left here.

Marcel Couturier discusses the scheme to create a National Park in Savoie for the protection of the bouquetin. The proposed park would be a French counterpart and continuation of the Italian Grand Paradis National Park which is limited by the frontier.

The seventh ' Rallye de Ski Alpin du C.A.F.' is summarised by Georges Bouscau.

OCTOBER. Guido Magnone's account of the French Expedition to the Muztagh Tower appears in this issue.

[1] *A. J.* 61. 431.

The two outstanding expeditions in the Alps last summer were the first ascents of the North ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey and the first direct ascent of the North-west face of L'Olan, both made by Jean Couzy and René Desmaison. Couzy describes and compares the two ascents in ' Noire et Olan. Théorie et pratique de la première '.

L. Eymas and G. Garby continue the history of the exploration of the Gouffre Berger.[2] A depth of 1,122 m. (3,681 ft.) below ground level has now been reached and the exploration of the Gouffre may be regarded as almost complete.

DECEMBER. Roger Salson describes the second ascent of the South-west buttress of the Petit Dru, first climbed by Walter Bonatti in 1955, and Claude Maillard gives an account of the 1956 French expedition to Greenland. The district visited lies near the head of Prince Christian Sound, not far from Cape Farewell at the southern tip of Greenland.

This number also includes an account of the attractions of La Flégère for the skier by James Couttet.

Some remarks on the early history of Mont Blanc by Etienne Bruhl were prompted by Daniel May's book, *Premiers Voyages au Mont Blanc*, reviewed on p. 327 of this month's issue.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

Alpine Climbing Group Bulletin. This is a useful annual published by the Alpine Climbing Group giving a summary of mountaineering events of the past year. It is indispensable to those who wish to keep their guide-books up to date. Copies may be obtained from the Editor, A. Blackshaw, 11 Grosvenor Road, London, N.10, at 3*s*., post free.

[2] *La Montagne et Alpinisme*, December, 1954, p. 118.