

REVIEWS

Berg und Mensch. Internationales Alpines Jahrbuch. 1961. Edited by Toni Hiebeler. Pp. 208. Illustrations, sketches, diagrams. Fr. Bassermann Verlag, München. Price DM 12.50.

THE appearance of yet another Alpine annual may be viewed with a little surprise. We have already *Berge der Welt* and *Alpe-Neige-Roc*, both of which have editions in more than one language; nevertheless, there is much of interest in the present volume containing, as it does, contributions from nineteen different authors.

After an introduction by Guido Tonella the many and varied articles cover a wide field from the technicalities of 'Das Bergseil und seine Sicherheit' (Heinrich Opitz) and 'Beitrag zur Kletter-und Sicherungstechnik' (Dietrich Hasser) to experiences with birds of prey in the mountains which Fritz Hieber recounts in 'Könige der Bergwelt'.

There are short biographies of several well-known climbers; Walter Bonatti (Aldo Minussi) and Attilio Tissi (Piero Rossi), and of Edward Whymper in 'Weg eines grossen Einsamen' by George Berger, written in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Whymper's death. British readers will be surprised to learn that Whymper was elected to the Alpine Club after making the first ascent of Mont Ventoux. This humble peak of Provence was climbed by Petrarch in 1335; Whymper went up Mont Pelvoux in 1861 but even this was not a first ascent, as is so often wrongly stated, but only the first British ascent and second ascent of the mountain.

Herbert Stifter, in 'Bahnbrecherin des Winteralpinismus', sketches the career of Mrs. Fred Burnaby (better known to us, perhaps, as Mrs. Aubrey le Blond) based largely on her book *The High Alps in Winter*. Mrs. le Blond may well have been a lady pioneer of winter mountaineering, but much had been done in that sphere before she appeared on the scene. Moore, for example, had crossed the Strahlegg in December, 1866, and the first winter ascents of the Wetterhorn and Jungfrau had been made by Coolidge in 1874.

Toni Hiebeler gives a twenty-three page account of the first winter ascent of the Eigerwand and among many other articles may be mentioned those dealing with the German Hindu Kush expedition of 1960, with some useful advice for future visitors to the region;¹ mountaineering in Czechoslovakia; climbs around Montserrat, and the history of the

¹ The first ascent of Tirich Mir was made in 1950 and not in 1955, as stated on p. 142, and Istor-o-Nal was climbed by an American, not an English, expedition.

Laliderer North face. Kurt Diemberger gives a summary of the 1960-61 expeditions to the Himalayas and there is a section devoted to new climbs in the Alps.

As a supplement there are four photographs, with routes marked and described, of the Schreckhorn group, Schiara Südwand, Musterstein Südwand, and Rote Wand Südwand.

An index would have been a valuable addition to the book.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

Nepal. By Toni Hagen. Pp. 117. Illus. Kümmerly u. Frey. Berne. 1961. 48 Swiss Francs.

Nepal: The Discovery of the Malla. By Giuseppe Tucci. Translated from the Italian by Lovett Edwards. Pp. 96. Illus. Allen and Unwin. London. 1952. 25s.

The Heart of Nepal. By Duncan Forbes. Pp. 192. Illus. Robert Hale. London. 1962. 21s.

NEPAL, until ten years ago a practically unknown country, is in danger of being overwritten. Hardly a year now passes without additions to the list: and leaving aside the accounts of climbing expeditions, which are of special interest, the majority of these books, since nearly every tourist feels compelled to record his impressions, add little or nothing to our knowledge of Nepal. Two of the three books under review are, however, of more than passing interest.

Dr. Toni Hagen, the well-known Swiss geologist in the service of the United Nations Organisation, is probably the only man, foreigner or otherwise, who has travelled the length and breadth of Nepal, and his geographical knowledge of the country is thus unique. His book does not deal with the details of his scientific researches, but is mainly concerned with a general description of the geography of Nepal and its effect upon the economic life of the people. The text is very short and designed as a commentary on the seventy full-page illustrations, which are magnificent. Many of them are in colour, and the whole book, which is superbly produced, is a tribute to the excellence of Swiss printing. Anyone contemplating a visit to Nepal, whether to climb or not, would be well advised to spend a preliminary hour or so in studying Dr. Hagen's thoughtful essay.

Professor Giuseppe Tucci is one of the world's foremost orientalists, whose special interest is Tibetan civilisation. He has made six journeys into Nepal, and in 1954, when travelling in the Jumla region, he uncovered a number of inscriptions which record the existence of a kingdom, extending from the extreme west of Nepal into Tibet, previously unknown to European historians. His researches, when fully worked out, are likely to result in a considerable revision of the present view of Nepal's early history. Meanwhile, this very brief account of his most recent journey, which seems to have been designed

for popular consumption, rather falls between two stools: not scholarly enough for the expert, it is too sketchy for the uninformed reader to comprehend. Of the sixty illustrations, those in colour are badly reproduced, and a number of the photographs have little relevance to the text.

The Heart of Nepal is a general account of Kathmandu and the other cities in the Nepal Valley. Mr. Forbes has a good knowledge of the history of the country, but his book adds little to what has already been many times published. He writes in a somewhat pedestrian style.

JOHN MORRIS.

Mémorial du Docteur Marc de Lavis-Trafford. *Travaux de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Maurienne*, tome xiv, 1962, n.p., pp. 223, portrait + 45 illustr.

WHEN Dr. Marc Antony de Lavis-Trafford, C.V.O., O.B.E., Physician to the late Duke of Connaught, died in 1960, the Cottian Alps lost their historian. For forty years, from his chalet at Le Planay above Bramans, he explored every inch of the highways and byways between the Arc and the Dora Riparia and studied every line of the texts ancient and modern referring to them. His chief contribution in the field of alpine history and cartography was to establish beyond the possibility of doubt that the pass called Petit Mont-Cenis from the Middle Ages until 1800 was quite different from that which from the beginning of the nineteenth century until now bears the same name. The Old Petit Mont-Cenis led from Exilles on the Dora Riparia to Bramans on the Arc, and was traversed by a Roman trackway which Dr. de Lavis-Trafford traced for considerable lengths. He was also able to show that it was used by wheeled traffic, for the wear caused by metal rimmed wheels on hard rock is quite evident. The Roman track was covered by a landslide from the Rochers Pénibles at some date probably in the eighth century, from which time the route which was so important to Charlemagne and the Carolingians was changed. It no longer started from Exilles but from Suze, on the Dora Riparia downstream from Exilles, and went up the valley of the Cenischia as far as what is now the Plateau of the Grand Mont-Cenis where it turned to the left (south-west) by what was known as the 'Couloir' to join the route of the Old Petit Mont-Cenis near Le Planay, whence the route followed the old track down to Bramans. Finally, the route was changed again in the thirteenth century; it led from Suze up to the Plateau of the Grand Mont-Cenis and then down over the pass that bears that name today to Lanslebourg on the Arc.

The name of Petit Mont-Cenis then came to be given to the 'Couloir'. This curious evolution, involving not the change in name of one and the same pass, but the ascription of the name of one pass to another, was

due to a number of factors which Dr. de Lavis-Trafford had traced. First, the oblivion into which the name of Petit Mont-Cenis fell at the start of the nineteenth century was due to the fact that the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic engineers completely ignored the writings of the great military cartographers of the eighteenth century: La Blottière, Bourcet, Montannel, and Pézay. Next, the name Petit Mont-Cenis, like that of other passes, did not originally mean the pass itself but all the high ground between the two end-points, in this case Bramans and Exilles. The Old Col du Petit Mont-Cenis had been forgotten, but the high ground that a traveller ascended when leaving Bramans continued to bear the name of Petit Mont-Cenis. Since the 'Couloir' was the chief outlet for a traveller who had started from Bramans, the 'Couloir' then became known as the Col du Petit Mont-Cenis. It leads north-east and is at least five miles from the Old Col du Petit Mont-Cenis that leads south.

The solution of this problem was made all the more difficult by the confusion into which later commentators have fallen when describing these regions. The Old Col du Petit Mont-Cenis has been confused with the Col Clapier, the Col de l'Agnel, the Col de Clarée. Coolidge made confusion worse confounded by uniting into one the two descents from the Old Col du Petit Mont-Cenis and the Col Clapier; it turned out that he had never crossed either pass. Dr. de Lavis-Trafford cannot absolve Douglas Freshfield from an imputation of bad faith because of his omissions and distortions of descriptions, aimed apparently at destroying the claims of a rival to the pass that Freshfield had decided was Hannibal's.

As the name of Col du Petit Mont-Cenis is now definitively allotted to the 'Couloir', to avoid further confusion Dr. de Lavis-Trafford gave the name of Col de Savine-Coche to the Old Col du Petit Mont-Cenis. Since his death and by Ministerial Decree it is now officially called 'Pas de Lavis-Trafford'. Dr. de Lavis-Trafford's studies are indispensable to anyone who tries to follow the campaigns fought over the Cottian Alps before the nineteenth century. The text has been published by the Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Maurienne from his papers as he left them. Some were destined for different publications, as a result of which there is a little overlapping, but this is not unwelcome in such an intricate problem, which is well illustrated by photographs and maps.

GAVIN DE BEER.

Trunk Road for Hannibal. By John Hoyte. 191 pp., 14 plates, 2 maps
Bles, 1960. Price 15s.

HANNIBAL'S route over the Alps is one of the classic historical puzzles. Reviewing in the *ALPINE JOURNAL*¹ Sir Gavin de Beer's arguments in

¹ *A. J.* 61. 101.

Alps and Elephants for the Col de la Traversette, Dr. A. H. McDonald, a supporter of the Col Clapier theory, wrote: 'The best procedure would be to take Polybius and Livy in one hand, and *Alps and Elephants* in the other, reading the ancient historians first, and travel the Alpine passes, the Durance and the upper Isère.' John Hoyte and his friends did that, and more. First, in 1956 they walked over these two cols, and also the Col du Mont Genève, and returned voting for the Col Clapier. Then, two years later, they borrowed an elephant from Turin Zoo and set out to test with a twentieth-century specimen their reconstruction of the route of Hannibal's elephants.

In the event, solicitude for the elephant in the face of the risk of stonefalls set off by the press photographers on the last stretch of the Col Clapier diverted the crossing to the Mont Cenis, but their support of the Col Clapier theory was confirmed and the feasibility of taking an elephant over the Alps with the timetable indicated by Polybius triumphantly demonstrated.

This book records what the author calls their 'extraordinary little cocktail of historical investigation and gay, student adventure'. If the manner of the telling is light-hearted, the investigation was serious and sensible. It was an admirably enterprising venture, the party enjoyed themselves, the press and the local populace enjoyed watching them, a few new points were added to the Hannibal controversy, and there is every prospect that the controversy can continue happily for another two thousand years.

A. K. RAWLINSON.

Ski de France. By Jean Franco and Marius Mora. Pp. 320. 74 illustrations, 150 sketches. B. Arthaud, Paris, 1962. Price N. F. 35.

WHEN reviewing a book of this kind for the ALPINE JOURNAL one wonders if the mountaineer is in fact concerned about the style of his ski-ing. I know quite a few who do not mind how they ski as long as they get down safely from their mountain in a reasonable length of time. Having watched the changes of ski-ing technique for nearly two generations, however, there is for me no doubt that the skier who has attained perfect control of the modern parallel technique will not only return from his tour more quickly but more safely as well, and with much less effort. For many of us, and certainly for myself, there is no time to achieve this degree of proficiency, but I have seen younger skiers adopt the modern methods very quickly within a few seasons by taking part regularly in systematic instruction such as that given to the Combined Services parties in the Engadine.

Having stated the case for the mountaineer's interest in ski-ing styles, I should like to say that France, amongst the Alpine countries, has a very good reputation as far as her ski-ing methods are concerned.

Jean Franco is the Director and Marius Mora a teacher at the French National School of Ski-ing and Alpinism in Chamonix and I understand that both have twenty-five years' experience in ski-training. They are highly recommended in a preface by Maurice Herzog who is well-known for his dramatic first ascent of Annapurna. Reading their book I feel the authors deserve this recommendation. They have gone to enormous trouble to analyse the forces which act on the skier in running and swinging. They have even asked a scientist, Prof. Leonce Foures of the Faculté des Sciences de Marseille, to contribute the scientific part of this analysis and to describe the principles of the ski-ing movements. They describe in great detail how one has to carry oneself in straight running and in swinging, and excellent sketches support the text. Film sequences have been used further to explain the positions in swinging, and some wonderful photos show the beauty of the French Alps.

I do not think this is the place to go into the details of modern ski-ing, but can assure the reader that the writers have done everything to make him understand their methods. The book is definitely to be recommended to the ambitious skier, the skier who wants to get the most out of the sport and the maximum enjoyment in greatest safety.

W. KIRSTEIN.

Stefano, We Shall Come Tomorrow. By Adam Skoczylas. Pp. 34, 10 illustrations. Poets' and Painters' Press, London, 1962.

Two Germans and two Italians took part in one of the attempts to climb the Eigerwand in 1957. After several days of bad weather observers at the Scheidegg and Grindelwald could see that the four men had come to a standstill and were unable to advance.

An international rescue team, composed of men from six nations, succeeded after stupendous efforts in rescuing one of the Italians, Claudio Corti; the other three climbers perished.

This little book is an account of the rescue, written by one who took part in the operation. The author, in an introductory note, makes an unfortunate slip in stating that the rescue took place between September 9 and 13. The events described, however, occurred in *August*, 1957.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

The Enchanted Mountains. By Robin Fedden. 124 pages, 8 plates. John Murray, 1962. Price 18s.

THIS book, Robin Fedden states in his preface, 'is not primarily about mountaineering', presumably in the sense that it does not provide any detailed descriptions of climbs or, indeed, much precise topographical information about the districts of the Pyrenees he has visited on three

different occasions. It is, however, something more significant, less ephemeral, and certainly far less dull—a book about mountains and mountain travel in the older, classical, tradition of Alpine Club literature, which is an outstanding piece of prose in its own right, besides being a delightful evocation of a little-visited region. To give a pattern to the book, the author has telescoped his journeys in space and time so as to provide various preludes to the main theme, in the form of accounts of climbs on the Pic d'Aneto and the Fourcade in the Maladetta Group, and of an ascent (in thick mist) of the North-west ridge of the Pic d'Astazaou above the more distant Cirque de Gavarnie. There is also a fascinating historical discursion on Count Russell's obsession with another French Pyrenean peak, the Vignemale. It is, however, the Enchanted Mountains of the Spanish Val d'Aran that give the book its title and focal point,—an area which for the independent camper-climber who values solitude and who is content with unglaciated rock peaks of up to 10,500 ft. must be one of the most beautiful and unspoilt in Europe. In the magnificent weather of 1957, camping in the side valleys of the Val d'Aran or of the more westerly Noguera Ribagorzana, amid dwarf pines and miniature trout-filled lakes, was sheer delight, as was a leisurely stay, as the only visitors, at one of the very few huts, superbly situated on the Estany Nere above Caldas de Bohí. (For the climber who prefers more *lujo*, some peaks of the Encantados are easily accessible from the comfortable fishing hotel at Espot.)

Besides his remarkable gift for poetic recollection in (comparative?) tranquillity, of the emotions, sights, sounds and feel of this fine mountain country, Robin Fedden is also at his best in thumb-nail human sketches of its inhabitants, such as the half-apocryphal Spanish smuggler Don Miguel; his correspondent in Toulouse majestically referring to creatures called 'solipèdes'; or the vanished patrons of the deserted Bains de Tredos above Salárdu, conjured up by a coronet on a fragment of towel. Best of all, however, is his extract from Beraldi's description of the first (1902) conquerors of the Encantados—the dandified Count Brulle 'tiré à quatre épingles, la guerre en dentelles', and his companion Count d'Astorg, personifying 'le mépris de la vulgarisation, du süssisme, du clubalpinisme et des yahous'. Accompanied at every step by the icy disdain of such ghosts, it is fortunate indeed that Mr. Fedden's party,—Club Alpinistes to a man, and to a woman as well—were not frozen on the spot like the erring shepherds who gave the mountain its name!

To complement such an entertaining and vivid text, one would have liked to have seen many more of Basil Goodfellow's excellent photographs, especially those he took of 'Los Encantados' themselves.

T. L. CROMBIE.

Highland Landscape. By W. H. Murray. Pp. 80. Maps. The National Trust for Scotland, Edinburgh, 1962. Price 15s.

It was wise of the National Trust for Scotland to appoint Mr. W. H. Murray to make a survey of, and report on, Scottish beauty areas, because few people have a more extensive knowledge of the Highlands than he has. His task was a difficult one because opinions of natural beauty differ, and depend on one's criterion of beauty itself. Mr. Murray writes 'Beauty stands here for the perfect expression of that ideal form to which everything that is perfect of its kind approaches. . . . Hence, in this survey, regions were selected on the criterion of beauty as apprehended by the surveyor.' The surveyor in this case is Mr. Murray and, as he is entitled to his opinions, nobody will quarrel with his selection of twenty-one 'beauty areas', though some people might choose a different list.

The sketch maps of his selected areas are of help in following his text and he has done a good job in giving reasons for his selections and his assessments of their merits. It is of course obvious that these areas are the best only at the present time (he was appointed to make the survey in June, 1961) for, as he himself would agree, changes in an area can happen quickly—a new dam can flood and ruin a glen, a new line of pylons can mar a view, and even the growth of trees planted under afforestation schemes can, more slowly, alter the whole pattern of beauty. It is therefore almost ludicrous to suggest, as is done in the foreword and on the dust-cover, that these 'beauty spots' can in any way be compared with 'Munro's Tables' of mountain summits. The late Sir Hugh T. Munro, Bart., of Lindertis spent many years of painstaking effort in making his list of Scottish mountain summits and subsidiary tops over 3,000 ft. in height, and these tops do not alter, but are known as 'Munroes' to all mountain lovers in this country and sometimes even abroad. The 'beauty areas' in Mr. Murray's survey are much less permanent and can change in a very short time, comparatively, so that his list will need constant revision to keep it up to date.

Nevertheless, Mr. Murray has done a great work and it is to be hoped that his survey will receive wide publicity, so that if possible the destruction of our national heritage of beauty by hydro-electric schemes, in particular, and to a lesser extent by afforestation may no longer be permitted. Scenery once destroyed can never be effectively restored and it is a pity that this great capital asset, of which the value in relation to the developing tourist industry is only recently being realised, should be destroyed for so little gain. One is particularly pleased to note Mr. Murray's remarks about the Glen Nevis area being 'one of the principal scenic wonders of Scotland'. Yet it is now threatened by a trifling hydro-electric scheme which will produce a mere fraction of the total

power requirements of the country. Why, oh! why, destroy this, the last of the beautiful, unspoiled glens of Scotland, for the sake of a few paltry kilowatts?

G. G. MACPHEE.

Selected Climbs in the Pennine Alps (Alpine Club Guide Books, Vol. 2).

Edited by J. Neill. 1962. Pp. 246. 53 diagrams. Obtainable from Thomas J. Gaston, 13/14 Bishop's Court, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2. Price 21s. (18s. to members of the A.C. or A.C.G.).

FEW today climb with guides, nearly all with guide books. A characteristic mark of the post-war flowering of British Alpine climbing was the publication, first in stencilled sheets, then in a printed volume, of the Alpine Climbing Group's *Selected Climbs in the Range of Mont Blanc*. It was always intended to follow this with further volumes on other areas, and the second, on the Pennine Alps, has long been in preparation. It now appears to inaugurate the collaboration of the Alpine Club and the Alpine Climbing Group in the whole project of an up-to-date series of Alpine guide books in English.

In presentation this is an improvement on the Mont Blanc guide. Both text and diagrams are more elegantly printed and the attractive and practical illustrated plastic cover (similar to that of the German Dolomite guides) deserves special praise. As in the Mont Blanc guide, the text is based on translation from the standard guide book to the region, in this case the Swiss *Guide des Alpes Valaisannes*, for which for many years climbers have been indebted to our honorary member Marcel Kurz, but the information given is adapted for use by British climbers, and by stringent selectiveness four Kurz volumes are condensed into one.

There are strong practical arguments for being selective, and within its limits the selection is a good one. It covers the whole of the Valais, from the Saas peaks to the Combin, with the main emphasis, inevitably and rightly, on Zermatt, and most of the obvious routes are included, of all standards of difficulty. Yet while the saving in cost and bulk achieved is welcome, the degree of selectiveness may somewhat limit the utility of the book to those who already know some of the main climbs of the area, and take some of the fun out of planning for those who do not; and certainly it will curtail its value as bedside reading and on storm bound days in huts when it is the only literature. It would have been convenient to have more of the lesser climbs around Zermatt which serve for the first day or for poor weather, such as the Pointe de Zinal or the Trifhorn. But nearly all the climbs included would be on anyone's first list.

An innovation in the sense that it is not in Kurz is that a grading is given for the difficulty of each route. There is no doubt that most

climbers of today want this. The gradings follow the French system and use the French terms (AD = assez difficile, etc.). This is illogical in an English book, but the French system is well established and understood by British climbers, and there is merit in keeping to one system throughout the series. Naturally the gradings need to be interpreted with discretion. Part of their purpose is to provide comparisons between one climb and another, but occasionally they may do this misleadingly. For example, there is little in common between a big and serious but technically moderate climb like the E. ridge of the Dent d'Hérens and a short, easily accessible rock-climb like the N.N.E. ridge of the Aiguille de l'M, both graded D. But the gradings given in the present book are broadly self-consistent and they do serve usefully to indicate the relative difficulty of climbs of the same type, when conditions are favourable.

All in all, this is an excellent outcome of the collaboration between the A.C. and A.C.G., and the editor deserves warm thanks and congratulation. To anyone who has not got Kurz it is indispensable, and even those who have Kurz will find it interesting and ought to buy it, for on the success of this one depends the practicability of issuing the further volumes which are in preparation on other districts.

A. K. RAWLINSON.