REVIEWS

The Way to the Mountains of the Moon. By R. M. Bere. Pp. xii, 147; 12 plates, 6 maps. Arthur Barker, 1966. Price 36*s*.

If you regard mountains primarily as engineering problems to be overcome do not waste money on this book, for its pages are unsullied by so much as a piton; if you are a tiger you will be bored by the author's failure to mention the grades of any of his climbs, of which more were failures than successes. If however you are akin to Mr. Rat and enjoy just messing about on mountains, then you should read this book which describes a lifetime of messing about on and around mountains in East Africa. It includes messing about in thick bush or mist on unexplored peaks—'we then reached a clearing and I discovered to my horror that we were not only going in the wrong direction but that we were also aiming at the wrong mountain'; messing about surveying—'the base-line had to be in the flattest and therefore the wettest part of the bog-land beside the lake. We had to measure out this line, floundering chainlength by chainlength through the mire while Peter sat in state behind his plane-table under a huge golf umbrella'; messing about bird-watching—'by standing perfectly still with the right flowers festooned about our hats we could persuade the sunbirds to fly right up to us hoping for a new source of nectar'; and of course messing about pure and simple—'I felt content just to be in the high Ruwenzori, and had little inclination to do more than take an evening stroll to the Stuhlmann Pass.'

Rennie Bere went to Uganda as a District Officer in 1930 and was posted to a district most of which is flat and bush-covered, but is relieved by some remarkable rocky inselbergs, so his first local essay at climbing was up one of these, seconded by his District Commissioner on a locally made rope of twisted lianes. More ambitious plans led to the Virunga Volcanoes of which he climbed five including Mikeno, the highest, and Nyamulagira, one of the two still active, where he watched an eruption in progress, a river of lava, like a nightmare glacier with its surface moraines of grey ash, pouring down to Lake Kivu 4000 ft. below. Another attraction of the volcanoes were the elusive mountain gorillas, which George Schaller, who recently spent a year among them, has shown to be undeserving of their ferocious reputation. Subsequent trips took Bere to Mount Elgon and the drier volcanoes of Karamoja, and later to Mount Kenya, but all this was only the background for a long series of expeditions to the Ruwenzori, the Mountains of the Moon, over a period of twenty-five years; the first with just a few porters, the last leading a party which included four members of the A.C. (the reason he gives for my absence

from this party is however libellous; it was the *other* dog, not my own, that bit me).

The modest title of the book belies his real achievements in the range which include two ascents of Margherita, the highest peak; first ascents of two others; the founding and fostering of the Mountain Club of Uganda through its early years and particularly in its efforts to build mountain huts along the main routes in the Ruwenzori and on other Uganda mountains; and his unfailing help and encouragement to other mountaineers, whether skilled but unequipped Polish alpinists whom the fortunes of war brought to the refugee camp under his charge, or young Ugandans on an 'Upward Bound' course. Nevertheless the title clearly places the emphasis where he would wish it. The final consummation of one's efforts on the summit is so often a hurried anti-climax, distracted by the rigours of the ascent or the problems of the descent, often not achieved at all, that the most reliable and enduring pleasures of mountaineering are to be found on the way to the peaks: in the hopes and preparations; in the accounts of one's predecessors and the folklore of the local people; in the origins of the mountains in the far geological past and in the life which has evolved upon them; in the exploration of new country or the recognition of familiar landmarks; in a roaring camp-fire and an unexpected bottle of gin when benighted. It is all these which can make every trip a success, memorable for oneself and worth writing about for others.

In 1954 Bere's interests in natural history and conservation were recognised by his appointment as Director of the Uganda National Parks, and they are also clearly shown in this book. There are many photographs of mountain flora and fauna besides ones of rock and snow, many odd facts and tales about them in the text (how Malthus would have approved of the antelope whose rarity is said by the local people to be due to the female being so adept at using her horns in self defence that she allows the male to mount her only once in her lifetime!); more detailed notes and species lists in appendices, and an erudite account of the discovery and exploration of the range. No one interested in East African mountains should miss this book which will also give pleasure to many others, whether mountaineers or not.

H. A. OSMASTON.

The Avalanche Enigma. By Colin Fraser. Pp. xvi, 301. Illustrations. John Murray, London. 1966. Price 42*s.*

THIS excellent book embraces a very wide range of subjects connected with the danger of avalanches.

It explains, in simple terms, the processes in the snow cover which create avalanches and describes the technicalities of accidents which

have occurred. More particularly, however, it deals with the development of avalanche research, and especially the work of the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research at the Weissfluhjoch, Davos, with which the author was connected for a time. The detailed account of the avalanche classification system, developed by the Institute, and full information concerning weather factors, types of terrain, and other relevant matters, are invaluable guides for skiers, particularly ski tourers, but should also interest track runners. The book should, unquestionably, be read by mountaineers to whom it shows, more clearly than any other work in the English language, the dangers they may encounter on mountains covered in snow.

The works of many authors on the subject are cited.

G. SELIGMAN.

Geology of the Himalayas.[1] By August Gansser. Pp. xv, 289. Profusely illustrated, panoramas, geological sections. Coloured geological maps (2). Interscience Publishers (Wiley), 1964. [Price not stated.]

IN 1908 appeared that notable work, *A Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalaya Mountains and Tibet*, by Col. S. G. Burrard and H. H. Hayden (later Sir Henry), that was republished in 1933 in a revised edition by Sir Sidney Burrard and Dr. A. M. Heron, and which, incidentally, was no mere 'Sketch', but an important treatise. In the present splendid volume Professor A. Gansser, of the Department of Geology of the Federal Institute of Technology of the University of Zürich, makes an outstanding attempt to be worthy of its immense and magnificent subject and bring our information up to date. The author declares in the preface that he is personally acquainted with only three regions of the Himalayan chain, viz. the central Himalaya; the Darjeeling area; and, from quite recent investigations, the Bhutan section of the eastern Himalaya, in all of which field-work has necessarily involved a considerable amount of mountaineering. For the rest he has had to study many existing publications covering many years, and the result can only be described as very impressive. Not till the end of 1962 could arrangements be made to prepare the book, and there was a time-limit set on its publication for the International Geological Congress in New Delhi late in 1964. Then in 1963 Dr. Gansser was enabled by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research and the Swiss National Science Foundation to undertake an expedition into Bhutan, that most secluded of Himalayan States, and there to have the unique opportunity of gathering much quite new geological information.

The whole vast subject is systematically tackled and admirably summarised in twelve chapters, with superb photographic illustrations of the highest quality, apart from geological sections and panoramas, as

[1] The generally accepted plural, Himalaya, is used throughout this review.

well as two large detailed geological maps of the whole area. In such a comprehensive technical work it is difficult here to present an adequate picture of the vast array of mountain structures and their tectonics (building processes) which are exemplified in the Himalaya, the Karakoram and the great ranges of central Asia beyond; but in the opening chapter, entitled 'The Wider Frame of the Himalaya', the author has many significant observations to make on the relationship of all these ranges, which should stimulate the interest of even mountaineering purists. As to the Himalaya proper, with its truly spectacular 'syntaxial' bends of formations and structures at either end of the main range, marked in the west by Nanga Parbat and the great turn of the Indus River, and in the east by Namcha Barwa and the comparable bend of the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra, Gansser emphasises, as indeed have others, that these deflections are undoubtedly caused by northward directed spurs of the advancing Indian sub-continental mass, an indication, in other words, of continental displacement, which has contributed by its northward trend to the rise of the Himalaya. He does not, however, invoke the much-flaunted, but unproved, hypothesis of 'Continental Drift'!

In this short review one can only pick out certain salient features. The Karakoram (Chap. IV) are considered to be in part the structural link between the Himalaya proper and the Pamir, and their imposing aspect to be the result of very late morphogenetic (upward) movements, a factor that can be extended to much of the Himalaya proper. Incidentally, Prof. Ardito Desio's coming book on the geology of the Karakoram is keenly awaited; his excellent geological map of the region has already appeared (1964). The Central (Kumaon) Himalaya (Chap. VI) are given very full treatment, since it was here that the author with Arnold Heim in 1936 had made a notable contribution to a better understanding of the structures of the main range and their extension northwards into Tibet. In the course of a remarkable, though forbidden, journey in disguise, it will be remembered that the then young Gansser made a circumperambulation of the holy Mount Kailas (22,028 ft.), and collected much important geological evidence in a district of exceptional interest. This was well described in Heim & Gansser's book, *The Throne of the Gods* (1938). On nearby Nanda Devi that same year the present writer had made the interesting find of altered sedimentary rocks (as he had on Everest in 1924), indicating that these high summits had once lain beneath an ancient sea.

As far as the Nepal and Sikkim Himalaya are concerned (Chaps. VII and VIII), Dr. Gansser reviews the work of the Swiss geologist, T. Hagen, who in ten years from 1950, when he was commissioned by the Nepalese Government, has accumulated a wealth of geological facts in virtually unknown country. These, and the findings of geologists attached to the

later series of Everest expeditions through Nepal, apart from the earlier ones traversing Sikkim and Tibet, have provided data for a variety of interpretations of the fundamental structures (tectonics) of the country. Such is the scope for differences of opinion in interpretation, that it is significant that Gansser discards the views put forward as to the origin of 'nappe' structure comparable to that of the Alps, where great rock-sheets were shown to have been forced out of a deep sea basin, or 'geosyncline', and piled one on top of the other. Gansser claims that, although there are many moved rock-sheets to be found in the Himalaya, and much thrust-faulting and folding, the main range has not developed from a 'geosyncline', and consequently does not conform to the classical theory of Alpine mountain building. This to many will, no doubt, be a startling conclusion. It is important, too, to realise that, as opposed to the view of some of the earlier geologists, the core of the range is not composed of granite, except in very restricted localities. But granite veins from the depths are often found to have penetrated upwards into the overlying sedimentary series out of which the mountains have later been sculptured.

The author refers to the work of L. R. Wager and the writer in respect of the rocks of Everest, which we had found to be of sedimentary composition, and most probably of Carboniferous to Lower Permian age. This view is now supported, if not confirmed, by the exciting finds by the Swiss summit climbers of 1956 of fossil crinoid fragments, which are reproduced in two of Gansser's photomicrographs (Nos. 46 and 47). It may be remembered that the present writer's find in 1924 of supposed fossils at about 25,500 ft. on the north face of Everest, on microscopical examination turned out to be only an unusual example of 'cone-in-cone' structure, due to localised pressure effects. Moreover, small granitic veins were found in places intruding the mainly altered sedimentary series.

As far as Bhutan and the extreme eastern Himalaya are concerned, in Chap. VIII the author gives a preliminary and incomplete account of this difficult and secluded region. Folded metamorphosed sedimentary rocks, probably Pre-Cambrian in age, were found to underlie much of south-west and west Bhutan, with massive marbles and intrusions of granite in places. In Chap. IX, on the 'NEFA' (N.E. Frontier Agency) Himalaya, Gansser can record little as yet of the scantily known structure, though much of interest and importance must exist, apart even from the spectacular scenery and geomorphological effects of the great gorge of the Tsangpo River. Here rise the highest peaks east of Kangchenjunga, namely Namcha Barwa (25,445 ft.) and Gyala Peri (23,460 ft.), explored in 1913 by F. M. Bailey and H. T. Morshead, and corresponding as they do to Nanga Parbat and the gorge of the Indus at the western end of the Himalaya, as cited above.

In the current number of *The Mountain World*, 1964–65, Professor Gansser has contributed a fascinating article on 'Geological Research in the Bhutan Himalaya', which illuminates his work and experience in this grand country, and his feeling for the future of its yet-unspoilt people. 'Bhutan', he says, 'is one of those rare countries in which Tibetan culture has been preserved in a form suitable for its own ways', and he would deplore the kind of development now going on in Nepal, tourism, or the invasion of competing mountaineering expeditions. In his reference to the peak of Chomolhari (23,997 ft.), standing so prominently and significantly on the frontier of Bhutan and Tibet, beyond which we know such terrible things are happening at the hands of the Communist Chinese invaders of Tibet, he states 'Now the mountain looks down not on the long train of nomads, but on military columns whose assignment is to suppress a free country by brute force.' Can we not re-echo with the Tibetans in their tragic distress: 'How long, O Lord, how long?'

N. E. ODELL.

Mountain Conquest. By Eric Shipton. Pp. 147, 161 illustrations. American Publishing Co. Inc., New York, 1966.

SHIPTON's new book is a brief survey of the history of mountaineering on some of the world's great ranges, which he illustrates in detail by an account of the sieges laid to a relatively small number of selected peaks, ending in each instance with the first ascent. He starts with Mont Blanc from de Saussure's first reconnaissance to the ascent by Paccard and Balmat. The Matterhorn follows with a carefully impartial account of the final climb and aftermath. In Alaska we hear of the siege of Mount McKinley from Cook's fraudulent claim to the climb by Stuck and Karstens.

The whole second half of the book is given to the Himalaya. It is interesting to see how much more alive the writing becomes on this change to the Asian scene. In both halves Shipton retains his old and admirable clarity of writing—nowhere a trace of pomposity, everywhere simplicity of expression and ease of manner. Graphic effects are achieved without strain or striving. None the less the brevity imposed, presumably by the terms under which he was commissioned and had to work, has drained the tale of much colour; this is more noticeable in the first half, continues into the second while we hear an obligatory history of early Himalayan climbing, and vanishes when we enter with him into the Rishi Ganga. It is most pleasing to hear a good word spoken once again for the Dhotials, who stuck by him in the penetration of the gorge to the Nanda Devi sanctuary. Mount Everest has a succinct chapter to itself, followed by one on four of the 8000-m. peaks—Kangchenjunga, Nanga Parbat, K2, and Annapurna (one paragraph).

No book is free of error in its first edition. One which we have found in *Mountain Conquest* is 'an Englishman, Lord Francis Douglas'. In 1865 his family had been Scottish for a thousand years (and ennobled for 700).[1]

Shipton opens his story by stating a good theme: that man has always wanted ease and plenty, and yet when he gets it is discontented and yearns for the hard road. When he finds it again on the seas, in the deserts, and at the Poles, his response is swift and joyous—and such too is our response to mountains. He ends by reminding us of our opportunities, that hundreds of Himalayan peaks are unexplored. The illustrations in colour photogravure and black-and-white are numerous and excellent.

W. H. MURRAY.

Spitsbergen. By Hugo Nünlist. Pp. 191. 48 illustrations and 5 maps. Nicholas Kaye, Ltd., London. 1966. Price 35*s*.

As far as the reviewer is aware, this is the first book in English on mountaineering in Spitsbergen since accounts of the Oxford and Cambridge expeditions of the 1930s. As such it fills a need, for with the ever-expanding numbers of mountaineers there is a demand at all levels of ability for new peaks or routes to climb, or at least for annually virgin snow. For most, however, the great ranges demand too much time and money and also an unpleasant amount of organisation, and thus high latitude is frequently being substituted for high altitude. Hence the northwards summer migration of mountaineers, most often to Greenland, but also to Spitsbergen, which is much smaller and at a lower altitude and, though further north, is rather better known. However, Greenland suffers from problems both of cost and of local access but in Spitsbergen neither is so formidable. Thus, Spitsbergen, especially the west coast, is in many ways ideal for those with limited time or ability, and in his book Nünlist conveys the pleasure of the one-thousand mile approach through or along Scandinavia, the crossings of the Barents Sea and finally the sight of the 'mystic northern mountains rising from the icy seas'. He accurately portrays both the pleasures and pain of arctic mountaineering. The treacherous mud-covered permafrost, the filthy moraines, the interminable slush; the rain, sleet and snow; the howling gales and sudden mist; and also the more than off-setting pleasures, the sudden ragged blue holes in a grey sky, and then the quiet, the space and the mystery, the apparent vastness of it all, and peace of the pale blue arctic sky. Nünlist communicates both this variety in the elements, and the togetherness and yet latent competitiveness of a small isolated group of people, with understanding and enjoyment.

The climbs and journeys are clearly described. One knows which mountains were climbed, and how and why, and these descriptions are

[1] Serious errors occur, *not*, we think, attributable to the author.—EDITOR

accompanied by a number of simple but very effective maps and by a selection of photographs, which, for once in a mountaineering book, actually assist the text. In fact the photographs are very valuable; they accurately reproduce the nature of this part of Spitsbergen, and either you are attracted or you are not, and thus they encourage or save a four-thousand mile return journey!

As a whole the book is a pleasure to read, but for those familiar with Spitsbergen it is often equally infuriating. The place name translations, mistranslations and untranslations are confusing, incorrect and improper. The party is billed as the 'Swiss Scientific Expedition', but the Carboniferous is not in the Palaeolithic, nor is the east side of Monacobreen made of recent volcanics; some marbles also weather yellow! Nünlist's obsession over cairns, his irrelevant but diverting fifty-year-old quotations from Nansen (to Nünlist the modern authority on Spitsbergen!) and the endless crevasses on rock ridges also provide slightly exasperating insights into the author's personality.

However, I am sure that the book will provide much interest to many armchair travellers this winter.

R. H. WALLIS.

The Everest Adventure: Story of the Second Indian Expedition. By John Dias. Pp. 63. Illustrations. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi. 1965. Price 55*s*.

MY first reaction, on receiving this slim volume and glancing through its excellent and evocative illustrations, was: 'Yet another Everest book!'. Even the choice of titles is narrowing as the bibliography proliferates; the name and the chapter headings of this further contribution to the Everest saga are only marginally different from some of its predecessors.

This mood was hard to shake off while I followed once more the well-established plan which carried the Indian party, as it had carried us ten years earlier, to Thyangboche; through the same three weeks' acclimatisation period; onwards to the familiar site of the base camp; through the labyrinthine hazards of the ice-fall. Even the passages in the ice-fall had a familiar ring; 'Hillary's Horror' had become 'Hari's Horror', and later, there was the same 'double ferry' plan to the South Col.

But from that point I found my feelings changing. This was not so much because the fortunes of the gallant Indians and Sherpas differed from ours in the final assault above the Col; it was because the sincerity of John Dias' poetic prose, enlivened with vivid narrative and snatches of dialogue from men under stress, began to draw me back across thirteen years to that never-to-be-forgotten spot. I was with Dias and his companions; and I was joined again by Bourdillon, Evans, Ang Nyima, Da

Namgyal, Balu, Ed, Tenzing and the others. We were facing the same rending, breath-taking wind; there was the same struggle of the numbed will against exhaustion. Above all, Dias reminded me of the experience of utter dependence on others, in circumstances too big for each of us as individuals.

From that moment I read every word; I was with them every step of the way.

So, I dare wager, will everyone else be, British, Swiss, American, Chinese and Indian who shared the same experience. And, by this token, all other readers who enjoy a good adventure story will read this book with admiration and pleasure.

The second Indian Everest expedition played its part in 1963, in securing the success of their compatriots in 1965. This very human account is a moving contribution to the total record of men upon that mountain.

HUNT.

The Andes are Prickly. By Malcolm Slesser. Pp. 254. Illustrations. Victor Gollancz, London, 1966. Price 42*s*.

SO MANY accounts of mountaineering expeditions are confined to climbs and approaches that I anticipated reading with pleasure a book which, according to the cover blurb, concerns itself as much with the customs and behaviour of the native inhabitants and all other aspects of the countryside as it does with mountains.

Nor, in many ways, was I disappointed. Dr. Slesser is obviously an acute observer, whether it be of birds, flowers or personalities. He has a lively mind and writes in a racy manner that will no doubt please a wide public. Yet with so much of interest about which to write it seems a pity to include even the occasional page of irrelevant back-chat and, at times, I find his efforts to popularise the style a trifle irritating, for example, 'It was cold and dingy, and boy, I never wanted to see Abancay again'.

Probably the back-chat is included and the racy style adopted to underline that this was a happy, high spirited expedition singing its way on a shoestring budget through the inevitable difficulties and frustrations of travel in Peru.

The book, which describes the adventures of the Scottish Andean Expedition, 1964, is divided into two parts. Part One covers climbs in the Cordillera Veronica de Urubamba of south-east Peru, followed by a visit to Macchu Picchu and the journey by truck on the rough road from Cusco to Lima. Part Two describes the attempt on the unclimbed east face of Yerupaja in the Cordillera Huayhuash of central Peru.

Particularly fascinating are the discussions with the missionaries in Urco on the problems of the upland Indians 'whose way of life, based on a very involved and very enlightened civilisation, perished about four

hundred years ago with the Spanish invasion' and nothing has been put in its place. They are compared with the west highland Scots whose feudal system, before the suppression of the clans, had much in common with that of the Inca kingdom. Interesting too, are the arguments on the scope of a missionary's work particularly among the jungle peoples, discussing among other things whether the introduction of white man's clothing and hygiene are necessary adjuncts to the spreading of the Christian faith.

The mountaineering sequences I find less satisfying. The first ascent of Sirijuani (18,400 ft.) by two groups on different routes in one day from a base camp at 12,000 ft. odd was certainly a 'tour de force', particularly as many of the party had been at sea level six days before. The description of the near success on Chainapuerto (18,990 ft.) also makes graphic reading and is easy to follow. But the impression persists throughout the book, particularly in the accounts of the attempts on Padre Eterno (20,150 ft.) and Yerupaja (21,759 ft.), that the party is never wholly united in the attack and that there is insufficient firm leadership. Too many things are decided by vote and, more often than not, Slesser and Bryan seem to take diverging lines. As Dr. Slesser writes, 'Ours was a democratic party. While democracy is essential to freedom of thought it is a rate-limiting process—mountaineering not being war, there was, of course, a desire on the part of many members to regard the expedition as a holiday.'

The result, so far as the narrative is concerned, is that the tension of the attack on the two peaks, having been built up step by step towards the climax, fizzles out like a damp squib leaving the reader in a hiatus. That bad weather and difficult terrain were not wholly responsible is appreciated by the author who says in his foreword that this does not claim to be a mountaineer's book. Perhaps its greatest appeal, as he suggests, is to the armchair traveller to whom the amusing and hair-raising accounts of the journey by train to Macchu Picchu and by road from Cusco to Lima and thence to Chiquian will make splendid reading.

An interesting point from the mountaineer's angle is that the party was a mixed one consisting of eight men and two women. One woman was a doctor, the other a fluent linguist and both had experience of high altitude climbing. No doubt there were misgivings on the part of some of the males when the idea was first mooted but Dr. Slesser is emphatic that the experiment proved a great success, although not entirely in the ways anticipated.

As one would expect in a travel book at this price (42*s*.) it is profusely illustrated with excellent photographs which, with odd exceptions, are well reproduced, and the four maps are clear and adequate.

H. L. Stembridge.

The Mountain World, 1964/65. English version, edited by Malcolm Barnes. Pp. xviii, 215. Illustrations and maps. George Allen & Unwin, London. 1966. Price 42*s*.

The Mountain World is always something to look forward to, and Herr Hans Müller, under whose direction this volume appears (the translation is almost wholly by Hugh Merrick), has produced a good feast. The Hindu Kush being an area much in demand these days, it is useful to hear of climbs there, by Gerald Gruber and Marcus Schmuck. Major Kumar gives a short account of the Indian Nanda Devi Expedition of 1964, and Willy Unsoeld's tale of the first climbing of Everest by the West ridge is a story that can never be dull.

But one may legitimately find greatest interest in regions still little known to most men. August Gansser writes on 'Geological Research in the Bhutan Himalaya'; his map on pp. 96/97 may be compared with those in *A.J. 68*. 37 and *70*. 107, and he has three photographs (nos. 33–35) which connect with one another and illustrate what fine peaks there are in North-eastern Bhutan. The author expresses a hope that Bhutan will *not* be opened up to tourists.

Antarctica is perhaps the largest area remaining of unknown mountains, so the two articles, 'Mapping the Antarctic' and 'The Ellsworth Mountains of Antarctica' are especially welcome.

Among other articles are those chronicling climbs in the Himalaya and Hindu Kush during 1963–64, and explorations in the Peruvian Andes from 1958–63 (with a useful map in the pocket of the binding case). A list of the world's highest peaks over 7400 m. may serve as a challenge to anyone who thinks he can find errors; and further lists, of the highest peaks in the Andes and 'height records', follow.

The Alps are represented mainly by an article by Herr Müller, on the first ascent of the Matterhorn. This is in two portions, the first a general description (pp. 1–10) of the famous event, and the second a series of newspaper reports during July and August, 1865, reflecting the opinions expressed (mostly on the Continent) about the accident. Several of these (*Journal de Genève*) expand the briefer references in *A.J. 70*. 200–1, and others, of varying degrees of accuracy or inaccuracy, show what wild rumours there were. By contrast, the Bern *Sonntagspost*, edited by Dr. Abraham Roth (a founder-member of the S.A.C.) wrote temperately, and rebuked the gossipmongers, of whom a poet, Alfred Meissner, was in the front rank.

In his own narrative, Herr Müller gives a balanced account of the struggle for the first ascent of the mountain; a few details call for correction, as that Whymper made the first ascent of Mont Pelvoux (p. 3) and (p. 5) that his was the second ascent of the Dent Blanche.

Herr Müller, in the main, writes so judiciously that his third paragraph on p. 9 reads as though it were by another hand. It is not true that

Whymper 'wilfully maintained silence about Hudson's considerable contribution to the successful climb'; on the contrary, he went out of his way, in his letter to *The Times*, and later in *Scrambles*, to say how ably Hudson had managed on the ascent, in which he had shared the lead in the lower stages. And in his letter to von Fellenberg (as in the two foregoing sources) Whymper stresses how Hudson was, in sureness of foot, the equal of a guide. Whymper's mild comments about Hudson related to the latter taking the inexperienced Hadow, and to the rope not being taut between the victims at the critical moment. As Dr. Roth (p. 26) pointed out (as others have done), Hudson had taken too much on himself, with disastrous results—Roth's observations are much stronger than anything Whymper wrote.

As for Whymper's attitude to the elder Taugwalder being 'equally irresponsible', for Herr Müller to call Old Peter an 'excellent guide' ignores the man's poor record. There was no systematic belittling of the guide; Whymper told the same story in various publications over the years, and as Herr Müller himself says, 'the unbiassed observer . . . will have no difficulty in recognising the correctness of the facts as presented'.

For the rest, the Alpine Club was not recruited from the upper layers of society, and Whymper seems to have found his place in it without much difficulty. As he became older, he became more severe and retiring and crusty, and was never very popular. But neither by birth nor education was he a misfit.

T. S. Blakeney.

Rock Climbers in Action in Snowdonia. By John Cleare and Tony Smythe. Pp. 127. Illustrations. Secker and Warburg, 1966. Price 35*s*.

There seem to be two hallowed stools in mountain writing. That of epic account, biography, philosophy or instruction which are subordinately illustrated, with varying standards of relevance, on one side: and on the other hand the lavish photographic essay, with subordinate sections on location, history and so on.

Lately, some books have appeared that, rather than fall, are deliberately placed between these two stools. One obvious example is Rébuffat's *Between Heaven and Earth*, and now here is another one on modern climbing in Snowdonia.

Taking the rather verbose title as a brief, the illustrations meet it magnificently (although there is a lack of coverage of easier routes). It is difficult, for me at least, to be sufficiently enthusiastic about John Cleare's photography. On two counts above all, he has succeeded brilliantly. Firstly there is the inventiveness of his choice of where to put himself and the camera. In so many climbing pictures one is conscious that something of interest has been put in the distance simply because the mountain got in the way of the photographer. These ones

are different because this photographer is prepared to sit in a sling, half-way down an abseil, just beside a route, to get more than a foreshortened back view of a climber above a huge pair of P.A. soles. Given the shot of Cenotaph Corner, or Hangover, or even that of Crackstone Rib, there are two obvious reactions:

(*a*) Why didn't I think of taking it from there?
(*b*) I'll chuck away my photos and try to borrow John Cleare's negatives (or buy this book).

The second count is that of communication of what it is like to do the climbs, rather than just what they look like. Looking at these pictures, one can feel the loneliness of a leader well up a long, hard pitch, sense the grimness of a steep wall on a mediocre day and pause at the patent exposure of the climbs shown. John Cleare has put in a lucid and defensible explanation of why some of the angles look a bit steeper than memory—I find his case impossible to disagree with.

The text is less continuously related to the title. To me, Tony Smythe seems to shift his aim at the audience as the book progresses. Initially there is a strong autobiographical theme which, like that of other climbing authors, is presumably aimed at a broad section of non-climbers, who might want to start joining in. By the end, he is explaining the approach and philosophy of the current vanguard of Welsh climbing. Underlying this is a thesis that the van is radically different from their contemporaries and antecedents—there seems to be an assumption that iconoclasm has just been invented. This theme appears to be aimed at 'squarer' climbers and not at a lay public, whose interest in this area may be tenuous.

Anyway, aims apart, the text meets the brief and is an account of rock climbing in Snowdonia. The funny stories are very funny, the accounts pertinent and the errors minor. I suspect that Dr. John Mawe prefers his own spelling of his surname and that John Streetly, in his native West Indies, may be a little surprised to find himself South African.

J. H. LONGLAND.

Llanberis South (Climbers' Club Guides to Wales, No. 5). By P. Crew. Cloister Press Ltd., Heaton Mersey. 1966.
Snowdon South (Climbers' Club Guides to Wales, No. 8). By Trevor Jones and John Neill. Cloister Press Ltd. Second edition, 1966.
Cornwall, vol. II (Climbers' Club Guide). By V. N. Stevenson. Cloister Press Ltd. 1966.

NO LESS than three new C.C. guide-books have appeared within as many months during the summer of 1966. All are good guides, produced in the now familiar format, with challenging photographs on the plastic-

protected front and back covers. The most attractive cover picture is that on the front of the Cornish guide, the most striking that on the back of *Llanberis South*.

All three guides are replacements, or part replacements, of older ones, and therefore are not breaking entirely new ground. But Stevenson's *Cornwall* (vol. II) is, in effect, a completely new work, the original one volume guide of A. W. Andrews and E. C. Pyatt which appeared thirteen years ago having been overtaken by an eight-fold increase in the number of routes. This has meant that the tip of Cornwall now needs two separate volumes, of which vol. II (West and South Coasts of West Penrith) is the first to appear: vol. I will follow shortly. Stevenson's guide is less discursive, and more concerned with the climbs, than was its predecessor: there is both gain and loss in this, but gain predominates. It is an excellent guide, and C. Fishwick's diagrammatic drawings of the cliffs are an outstanding feature. A reviewer who only knows a few of the climbs in that area cannot say whether they are any clearer than those of R. B. Evans, who illustrates the two North Wales volumes; these diagrams also are first rate for their purpose, but less sensitively drawn.

Trevor Jones and John Neill, the authors of the original *Snowdon South* of 1960, have not had to include nearly so many new routes as Stevenson in their present edition. They have nevertheless been compelled by the march of events to do considerably more than a minor revision of their first guide (which was the original intention). 'Snowdon South' does not, of course, just mean the climbs on the southern flank of Snowdon; the area which the guide covers extends all the way south from Snowdon to the cliffs just inland from the sea at Tremadoc. More than half the route descriptions in this guide are of the Tremadoc climbs, many of them very fine routes; but whereas in Cornwall there are no mountains, and one therefore has no reservations about cliff climbing, it is difficult not to feel some regret that in Snowdonia Tremadoc is now thought to be more of a major climbing ground than the Llanberis Pass. The authors, to whom no blame attaches, assure us that this is so.

Crew's extremely competent *Llanberis South* is, as the author says, 'the last of the three guides replacing Harding's 1950 *Llanberis Pass*'. For the older climbs, not much alteration of Harding's descriptions has been necessary, except in order to relate them to routes which have been done since his guide was published. Important new climbs have been made on Cyrn Las and elsewhere; but the most significant thing is probably the development of modern lines on the Eastern and Western Wings of Dinas Mot. Crew's remark that in the area south of the Pass 'one needs a generally higher standard of competence and experience to climb safely' perhaps applies especially to these two cliffs.

A. D. M. Cox.

SHORTER NOTICES

A Climber's Guide to the Rocky Mountains of Canada. By J. Monroe Thorington. Sixth edition (with collaboration of W. L. Putnam). American Alpine Club, New York, 1966. Price $6.00.

THIS guide-book first appeared in 1921 and has ever since been a necessary companion for anyone interested in the Canadian Rockies. The author's name is a guarantee of its excellence, for not only is he an indefatigable chronicler of mountain events, but has himself played no small part in the exploration of the mountain ranges here described.

A useful introduction explains the plan of the book; over 1000 peaks are listed and more than 100 passes. Considering the convenient pocket-size of the volume, it is remarkable that it has been possible to include so much more detail about routes—not for Dr. Thorington just a Baedeker-like 'trying', or 'needs a steady head'.

Altogether a worthy edition of a standard work and one that will put climbers still more into the debt of the author and of the A.A.C.

Mountains of Britain. By Edward C. Pyatt. Pp. 216. Photographs. B. T. Batsford, London, 1966. Price 25*s*.

THIS well printed and well illustrated book is remarkably cheap for today, and it covers a great deal of ground, inevitably rather briefly. Not only are the well known regions such as North Wales or the Lake District described, but the book extends its view from Cornwall to the very north of Scotland, with Ireland added for good measure. It is not a book for a climbing specialist; but for a walker, or even a motorist who wanted to put in an occasional climb, it may be found a useful general survey.

Climbing Blind. By Colette Richard (translated by Norman Dale). Pp. 159. Illustrations. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1966. Price 21*s*.

MONT BLANC was climbed by a blind man as long ago as 1880 and later instances of blind mountaineering have been recorded.[1] But Colette Richard's book is the first to tell us of several seasons spent in mountaineering and in caving. She lost her sight at the age of two and now can only distinguish between light and dark, just as one does with one's eyes shut. But she would reject any pity for her condition and, being possessed of an absorbing love for all she has learned about mountains, has set about making first-hand acquaintance.

It is not for the climbs themselves that one should read this book, but in order to appreciate the author's outlook. She writes convincingly, so that one shares her fears and her delights; also, one learns something of a blind person's reactions to the climbing environment, whether above or

[1] *A.J.* 65. 97; 70. 134.

below earth. The blind, she says, cannot suffer from physical vertigo, but they experience a sort of 'moral vertigo': they are very conscious of space, and their other senses are sharpened by their lack of sight, so that a rock wall, on the one hand, or a void, on the other, make themselves felt. It is the void that worries them, whether a depth of thousands of feet, or a mere hollow or step down.

When she turned to speleology, she had the benefit of the expert leadership of Norbert Casteret. She explored caves in the Pyrenees that had wall drawings of twenty thousand years age or more; she wanted more than acrobatics, and came to feel sufficiently at home in these prehistoric retreats as to insist on spending a night alone in one cave.

She tells her story with great simplicity, and, as Maurice Herzog writes in a foreword, in an age when phoney exploits flourish, we need a book that restores meaning to the word 'adventure'.

A Traveller's Guide to Health. By James A. Adam. Diagrams. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1966. Price 12*s.* 6*d.*

In *A.J.* 70. 347, Dr. Somervell, in reviewing *Exploration Medicine*, remarked on the heavy weight of the volume, which was also not inexpensive. Colonel Adam, of the R.A.M.C., has produced the answer, in this *Traveller's Guide*, which takes the place of the medical chapters in the Royal Geographical Society's *Hints to Travellers* (now out of print) and is, naturally, more up to date.

The book (published for the R.G.S.) goes easily into one's pocket and can be understood by those without medical knowledge. Supported by a small advisory committee, among whom is Michael Ward, Colonel Adam covers general principles of hygiene; first aid; illnesses of universal occurrence, such as appendicitis or pneumonia, hay fever or ringworm (and much more); diseases peculiar to the tropics; and problems peculiar to cold regions. Altogether, this is an invaluable adjunct for any expedition, very moderately priced, and weighs under 6 ozs.

Le Ande. Monografia geografico-alpinistica. By Pietro Meciani. Pp. 158. Illustrations and maps. Tamari, Bologna, 1965. Price not stated.

This little book is a reprint of articles published by Signor Meciani in *Rivista Mensile* in the years 1961–64. With numerous illustrations and fifteen sketch maps it deals with the many groups and divisions of the Andes from Venezuela to Tierra del Fuego; there is a bibliography at the end of each section.

Much information is packed into the few pages and the book is a valuable work of reference to the 9000 kilometre long chain of the Andes, and can be warmly recommended.