

## REVIEWS

*The Mountaineer's Companion*. Edited by Michael Ward. Pp. 598. 26 plates; 20 drawings; 3 maps. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966. Price 50s.

MICHAEL WARD'S anthology is the most radical yet to come on the market, and this on three counts. Firstly, to make room for new writers, many once-revered heads have rolled from his chopping-block. John Addington Symonds has gone at last, his place taken by that keen-eyed critic James Morris. Petrarch, first exponent of the 'throw-away line' on new routes ('the nature of the place was the only obstacle'), gives way to an equal talent in Patey. Tennyson yields to Rébuffat, Goethe to Tenzing, and Bunyan's Delectable Mountains are happily replaced by Christian Bonington's. Even the Bible has been chopped. In its stead we hear Hunt. But many a canonised saint of the old Alpine Calendar survives, if narrowly. Leslie Stephen, Moore, Wills, Whymper, and Ruskin are with us yet, cut now to one entry apiece. A surprising survivor is Byron, and deservedly so for his terse *Crossing of the Scheidegg*.

Secondly, the editor has cut free from that long-lasting defensive attitude, which manifested itself as (an only apparent) literary snobbery, under which dead verse and dismal prose, some of it barely relevant, were dragged in for benefit of a literary lion's name-tag. He has, I suspect, included Amery's *First Alpine Season* mainly for the final passage giving Winston Churchill's climb on Monte Rosa, but that is different: Winston is an interesting subject in his own right. The editor declares at the start that he has chosen material only for the interest and enjoyment it gives him. While refusing to be disarmed, I note that this has meant the near-exclusion of skilfully elaborate Victorian prose, whose long rollers delighted a former generation, and the inclusion of choppy writing, unhazed by subtleties of either syntax or literary allusion, like Quintin Hogg's *Why I Like Climbing*. Today we find the Victorians boring; and if Hogg lacks elegance he has an appealing honesty and directness, and a gaiety we can share.

Thirdly, the editor departs from precedent in more often using long passages to give a complete incident. All this adds up to a more satisfying book, strongly built to a clean design.

The design is of nine parts: the Nature and Fascination of Climbing, the Alps, Britain, Everest, Accidents, the Himalaya, Men, Other Ranges, and the Secret Mountains (reserved for miscellaneous oddities). All but two parts are of forty to sixty pages and of seven to twelve entries. From this structure the editor has built up the Alps and Everest sections tower-like above the others, according them 114 and 106 pages with twenty-

three and twenty-seven entries. The selection of Everest for this build-up is to my mind a mistake. I feel that we have had too much of Everest in the last decade, and that to have it here again as a main feature spoils the book's new look. Succeeding expeditions do lend themselves naturally to a tiered structure, and the result is pleasing in itself, but does it not unjustifiably shadow the rest?

Since the new look is a refreshing merit, I wish it had been carried farther by including at least something of the new writing of the sixties, of which there is no example. The book has many passages written in the sixties, but of conventional style. A genuine attempt to break with the conventional mode and to find a new manner of expression was made by young climbers around and after 1960. They wanted something more alive, something different, in keeping with their new climbs and mental approach. This praiseworthy movement has so far failed, yet one or two good things were written and deserved a representation; an example might be Robin Smith's *The Bat and the Wicked* (describing a climb on Ben Nevis) written in 1960. Smith had an ear for the sound of words. On the other hand, the editor has done well in omitting such well-worn pieces as *Hanging Garden Gully*, and giving us instead J. M. Edwards's *A Great Effort* and Fitzgerald's *I'm a Sick Man, Fitzgerald*.

I find the weakest part of the book to be *Other Ranges*. Polyakov's *Victory Peak* has nothing memorable. Why choose Tilman's *Mountains of the Moon* excerpt? He is one of our best writers, his style is robust, his choice of the fit word unerring, his sense of irony sharp and fresh. But the above passage is one of his dullest. And I cannot enjoy that piece on the *Peak of Communism*. McNaught-Davis's article was of high interest in 1963, but the climb, like a bad dream, is better forgotten.

Under *Accidents* I regret that Ralph Barker's original version of the accident on the North face of Haramosh II in 1957 had to be missed out (it occupied sixty pages). It appears instead under Noyce's name (nineteen pages), titled *The Disciplined Skill*. The freshness of the first account has gone, crushed (as in a 'Readers Digest') between the skilfully compressed lines; but the incident remains one of the most fantastic in the records of mountaineering.

The subject of *Men* deserved more space than ten entries in forty-two pages. I regret here the absence of any of G. W. Young's obituaries. He excelled in character dissection. Perhaps they were too long. The nearest we come to these enlightening discussions is in Lunn's shorter study of Coolidge.

In the *Everest* section, Norman Collie's *Mountaineering, 1921*, appears to be misplaced: 'The joy of living becomes a real and great joy, all is right with the world and life flies on golden wings.' Is this the kind of feeling engendered on that 'brutal mass' (Longstaff)? Compare too with Noyce's *Breathless*. The entire passage should be moved to *The*

*Nature and Fascination of Climbing*. Likewise, the *Chinese Ascent*—a rich source of unconscious humour, better than anything in the too conscious humour of Rum Doodle (which we are spared)—would have appeared more at home in the *Secret Mountains* department. The editor might then have introduced in its place one of those bitter, concluding passages from Earl Denman's *Alone to Everest* as a foil for Hunt's *Reflections*.

Poetry has not been marshalled under a heading, but each of the first eight sections is prefaced and concluded by verses from Shelley, Michael Roberts, Wordsworth, Geoffrey Winthrop Young, Noyce, and Dorothy Wellesley. The title page carries peculiarly apt lines from Emily Brontë. Men have so many times been moved by mountains to write prose of first quality that one wonders yet again why they have fallen short in verse-form. There is nothing here of top quality. Good as much of it is, the best is very much of the second order. But they pass the test of enjoyment and interest. Even Noyce's *Breathless*, which can seem at a first glance a slight and profitless bit of work, bears up to close attention and justifies itself: worth having, and *not* just because it was written at 21,200 ft. But will anyone who has not climbed high be able to appreciate it? That may be more doubtful.

Michael Ward compiled this book in the hope that his pleasure in mountaineering and its literature could be shared. His hope is fulfilled.

W. H. MURRAY.

*I Chose to Climb*. By Christian Bonington. Foreword by Eric Shipton.  
Pp. 208, 43 photographs. Gollancz, 1966. Price 30s.

OWEN GLYNNE JONES was attracted to climbing by a photograph of the Napes Needle in Cumberland, Chris Bonington by a picture book of the Cuillin of Skye. *I Chose to Climb* takes him from those pictures, picked up by chance when he was sixteen, to the first British ascent of the Eigerwand twelve years later, and the decision to become a professional mountaineer which gives this book its title and its theme.

It is a book which has aroused some controversy. In the months between publication and the writing of this review varying comments have been heard: on the one hand, praise of a major contribution to mountain literature, to become a classic for the freshness and immediacy of its descriptions of climbing; on the other, disappointment at the lack of the aesthetic, or shock at the frank reproduction of the language of the barrack room. This last feature was perhaps a mistake. It gives an added touch of realism to the dialogue, but this is doubtfully worth the offence caused to some who might otherwise enjoy the book. For there is much to enjoy. The style is Fleet Street, not Parnassus, but is fast moving, vivid, compulsively readable. To Bonington mountains

mean action, the action and thrill of difficult climbing. Action is what he gives his readers; and with brilliant success.

Apart from the enjoyment to be had from it, it is clearly a book of first importance, compulsory reading for anyone who wants to keep abreast of modern climbing and climbing literature. The descriptions of climbing are outstanding, both in quality and in subject: first winter ascents in Scotland; Annapurna II and Nuptse; the Eigerwand, the Central Pillar of Frênev on Mont Blanc, the Bonatti Pillar of the Dru, the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses, finished, after a bivouac on the Rocher de Whymper, by a traverse along the summit ridges to the Torino hut. At last we have in a book by a British mountaineer first-hand accounts of some of the great modern routes of the Alps. It is these alpine chapters which are the highlights, above all those about the Eigerwand, which dominates the book and justly provides its climax.

The wider importance of this book is that it provides a picture not only of the climbs but of the climbers. Different in many ways from the typical British alpinist of a generation ago, Bonington and his friends have something in common with the Victorian pioneers. Unlike the Victorians, they do not enjoy comfortable middle-class incomes, they are immensely more numerous, and the valleys from which they climb have changed out of recognition. But in two important respects they recall the pioneers. They visit the Alps for weeks at a time and so get really fit; and they are not overweighted by tradition. The Victorians had none; the moderns, less literary than their predecessors and more numerous, more easily ignore it. This gives them a youthful confidence, and a readiness to take difficulties on their merits and not through a barrier of preconception. They attack difficult climbs without the long apprenticeship on easy routes which used to be thought necessary. It is a practice which has its dangers. Bonington himself stresses the need for experience in order to be safe on the Eigerwand. But it is one reason for the technical surge forward of which this book is witness. The man who spends his early years on easy climbs acquires a preconception of what an alpine climb ought to be like which is later hard to break through.

Thus there is plenty of material here for the historian. But the book is to be enjoyed on a simpler level. Essentially it is a tale of gripping adventure, grippingly told.

A. K. RAWLINSON.

*Eiger Direct*. By Peter Gillman and Dougal Haston. Pp. 183. Illustrations (some coloured). Collins, 1966. Price 36s.

*Eiger Direct* is the story of the well-known events of February and March, 1966, told from the standpoint of the British-American party. Peter Gillman, who is a mountaineer as well as a journalist, represented

the *Telegraph* at Scheidegg during the climb and was the main operator of the radio link with the climbers on the face. He and Dougal Haston between them are able to give a synoptic view, and do so skilfully, of what was happening both on the mountain and down below. They write in the third person, except for some passages in which Haston describes the final phases. The style is nothing if not vivid, although certain features may be found irritating, e.g. the constant use of Christian names or the *verbatim* reporting of often rather trivial conversations. The book is nonetheless absorbing, and it is no hardship to read its 165 pages of actual narrative at a session—perhaps, indeed, this is the most enjoyable way of reading it. Without going into great technical detail, it succeeds in giving an impression of what the climbing was like, and it also conveys fairly the semi-Hollywood atmosphere prevailing lower down. The photographs are lavish—some coloured, some extremely striking. Nearly all were taken by Bonington, who of course did much else on the climb besides taking photographs. A pitch by pitch description of the route is given in an appendix.

Since this is the story of Harlin's party, the book naturally does not tell us much of how the events described appeared from the Germans' point of view. A sympathetic picture emerges of individuals, however, Karl Golikow for example; and there are times when one's heart warms to Peter Haag who, after twenty-three days on the face, says (p. 113), 'I prefer to stay up here; it's more peaceful'. In the British-American narrative certain things stand out: the magnificent climbing of Kor on the First Band and on the traverse at the foot of the Central Pillar; the struggle by which a snow-hole at Death Bivouac was occupied on the night of March 9; Harlin's and Haston's sitting out of a five-day storm in this snow-hole, with Harlin ill for part of the time; the appalling conditions in which the long drawn out final bid for the summit was made; Haston's lead, without an axe, of 150 ft. of sixty degree ice on the very last stages; and, of course, Harlin's tragic death through the breaking of a fixed rope. But there are many less dramatic points of interest; for example, the speed at which people moved up and down fixed ropes. It is not stressed as being out of the ordinary when on March 8 (p. 78) Kor descends from a bivouac at the top of the Second Band (about half way up the face) to Scheidegg in one and three-quarter hours, leaves Scheidegg next morning at 2 a.m. and is back at the bivouac by the time the others, who have spent the night there, are ready to set out.

The techniques used on the Eiger, and indeed the whole approach to the climb, bear little relation to the sort of climbing which was being done in the Alps even five years ago. Technical comment should be left to those who know what they are talking about; but, to hazard an opinion on two points, *if* a fixed rope technique of this type is to become a regular feature of alpine first ascents, it seems to be a lesson of this climb

that fixed ropes, intensively used, fray much more quickly than anyone had realised. The rope which broke on March 22 could not have been fixed, if I have read the story correctly, more than three days beforehand, and the six ropes between Death Bivouac and the Spider which (p. 143) were subsequently found to be 'frayed even worse than at the point where the rope had broken' had not been in position more than a few days longer. The second point relates to the first: a corollary to the use of fixed ropes is the climbing of fixed ropes solo, by prusik or jumar. Except for the possibility of the rope fraying, this should be perfectly safe; but it may result in the separation of a climber from some of his essential equipment, as happens in regard to bivouac equipment at least once in this narrative. The same factor came near to causing disaster when Haston, leading the second summit party, found that Lehne and Strobel, ahead of them, 'to my surprise, had taken all the ice-axes and hammers with them'. Although Haston extricated his party brilliantly from the situation in which this had landed them, similar situations will arise again if it is not recognised that there are certain items of equipment from which a climber on this type of climb must not be parted, whatever the circumstances.

A few pages at the beginning of the book are devoted to the early climbing history of the North face. In these a good deal of emphasis is laid on the bitter disapproval of older mountaineers (particularly Strutt) of the attempts of the 'thirties and the successful ascent of 1938; but to me this seems largely irrelevant, except that it shows how much harm may be done by an older generation failing to understand the point of view of a younger. The *grounds* on which the early attempts were criticised, whether right or wrong (and not all of them were wrong), have very little to do with the controversial features of the ascent of 1966.

Not much space is given to argument about these features; for the most part, facts are left to speak for themselves. Both parties had external financial backing, in the one case from a newspaper, in the other from a publishing firm which also marketed news rights. 'Doing this kind of climb is an extremely expensive thing,' one of the participants says. 'So unless you're a rich person you've got to find the money from somewhere.' The publicity thus deliberately accepted (and the climb would doubtless have attracted publicity in any case) was enormously increased by the coincidence of the two attempts, which were popularly seen as an international race. The arrival of the Germans had not, in fact, been bargained for, although (p. 49) it was known that they were training for the climb. The British-American party was disconcerted by it, but there was friendliness and increasing mutual co-operation between members of the two 'teams' long before the accident to Harlin occurred. The main obstacle to their joining up earlier than they did was the difference in their conceptions of how the route should be climbed.

The Germans had planned on one sort of siege method—slow, steady advance, by a large party ready to dig in during bad weather and push ahead as soon as it cleared; Harlin's party on another—waiting for a ten-day period of fine weather, and then climbing the route 'in one continuous push, carrying all their equipment with them as they went' (p. 34). The Harlin plan involved using a window of the Eigerwand station in order to deposit the heavy rucksacks below the First Band. The Germans did not need to do this; on the other hand, they intended to 'fix ropes on most of the route' (p. 53), which Harlin's party pretty clearly had not envisaged. In the conditions prevailing that winter, the German idea proved the more realistic, and by March 2 (p. 62) Harlin was compelled reluctantly to adopt it, although he never altogether gave up the idea of a rapid push for the top if the weather turned suitable. Climbers of both parties were prepared to retreat temporarily to the extraordinary atmosphere of Scheidegg (cf. pp. 111–12) whenever this seemed sensible; and individuals did this not infrequently, although between February 28, when the British-American party re-started operations after a week of bad weather, and March 25, when the summit was reached, one may calculate that there were only three nights (and after March 3 only one) in which Harlin, Haston and Kor were simultaneously off the face.

Granted certain assumptions, one can only admire the rigorous logic which went into the planning of the climb and the skill and extreme endurance by which it was achieved. There was nothing reckless about the venture; in fact, the methods used were largely dictated, for both parties, by considerations of safety. As a result (a point the book might fairly have emphasised), the lives of rescuers were never risked, as has happened so often before in the history of the face, and had it not been for the broken fixed rope, and the others which frayed, there is no reason to think that all eleven climbers would not have got to the top.

No doubt there will be other 'last great problems', but the Eigerwand through its position has always had a unique publicity value which it is difficult to see being challenged by any other face in the Alps. The aspects of the 1966 climb which have attracted most criticism arose from this, and they seem for this reason to have no general application to future alpine first ascents—indeed, it could be argued that the critics should be glad that the route has now been done. The climb itself, and this type of extreme climbing, can only be judged by the modern generation, as is rightly implied in the first few pages of the book. To a reviewer not of that generation, it seems that climbing is done for enjoyment; that there are many ways of enjoying it; that extreme climbing, if one is competent to do it, is one of them; and that very few people should mind if unorthodox means were used on a new route on the North face of the Eiger.

A. D. M. Cox.

*High Peak.* By Eric Byne and Geoffrey Sutton. Pp. 256. 46 illustrations. Sketch maps. Comprehensive glossary and bibliography. Secker and Warburg, 1966. Price 42s.

THIS particular book has been on the stocks for several years now and those of us who knew of it have been eagerly awaiting its launching. It has been well worth waiting for and is a most entertaining and instructive piece of historical writing. The delay in appearance has probably been beneficial because the authors have had time to assess the true significance of the various developments in limestone climbing and to get them into perspective with the rest of the book. Though I have leaned heavily on Eric Byne for advice about the Peak District in my own writing, I do not know either of the authors well enough to be able to decide which of them wrote which part. There are many different ways of collaborating, but there are no obvious 'changes of gear' in this one which might indicate lack of co-ordination between the authors.

It is the story of climbing and walking in the Peak District from the 1880's to the present day and is important for all of us no matter where we live or habitually climb. It happens that half the population of England lives within seventy miles of the area and, it is estimated, this half includes four-fifths of the rock climbers and hill walkers, for whom these are in fact the nearest rocks and the nearest hills. It is easy to appreciate, therefore, that the Peak District has played an unusually prominent part in the development of climbers and walkers and of the techniques of their sports.

We are introduced in the first chapter to the remarkable figure of J. W. Puttrell of Sheffield, who was certainly one of the founders of native British rock climbing. The others were W. P. Haskett-Smith (Lake District) and O. G. Jones (Cader Idris) who started up similar activities independently at around about the same time. Puttrell's climbing on gritstone was done under his own motivation and its beginnings owed nothing whatsoever to similar happenings elsewhere in Britain. It was only later that these various sources coalesced into one sport. Thanks to discussions with Eric Byne, Ronald Clark and I were able to introduce these ideas into our *Mountaineering in Britain* (Phoenix House, 1957); here the authors deal with it all in much greater detail. The story of gritstone climbing is unfolded in terms of the exploration of the various crags and the personalities who took part, emphasising all along the importance of this as a training ground for most of the leaders who have made their mark on British mountains from S. W. Herford to the contemporary experts. C. F. Kirkus is noted as an exception—he did not like gritstone, nor for that matter did J. M. Edwards; both of these were products of Helsby sandstone.

Full justice is now done at last to the young climbers from among the unemployed in the great northern cities during the depression years

of the early 1930's. Perhaps the greatest of these was Frank Elliott whose technical standard, based on gritstone performance, was superior to that of the greatest mountain rock climbers of the period, such as M. Linnell for example. Had economic circumstances enabled Elliott, H. Dover, G. Ellis, C. Moyer and the others to climb extensively in mountains, the development of British mountain rock climbing would certainly have been accelerated and might even have taken some different turn. We also touched on this in *Mountaineering in Britain*, but here we have it in full from an eye-witness who was himself one of those unemployed.

I was grateful to find that I occupy a minute niche in Peak climbing history—rating a mention in the text but not in the index. On a cycle tour of the district at Easter, 1937, two of us met Bernard Simmonds of Nottingham, who was to become one of the great gritstone climbers of the 1930's. As a result, groups of climbers from London and the south Midlands combined to form the Polaris Mountaineering Club, the members of which put up numbers of new climbs during the next few years. In fact I only thought of the name for the Club and had no part, I am sorry to say, in these explorations. The history of gritstone is continued into post-war years and blends finally into the tremendous upsurge of interest in limestone, also very plentiful hereabouts, which has characterised the last decade.

While there are circumstances which prevent the historian from being as forthright as he might sometimes wish to be, it is specially noteworthy to find to what extent the authors seem to like people. They show a camaraderie towards the climbers who have made the history which is almost naïve, though perhaps they just omit those they do not like! Only E. A. Baker comes in for criticism and even this is leavened with praise.

In addition to being a rock climbers' playground the extensive and somewhat featureless moorlands of the Peak District have produced a unique school of long distance walkers. This is all described—the exploits of Cecil Dawson just after the turn of the century, the Bog-trotters' Club, the invention of the now classic Marsden to Edale walk and various other expeditions longer and more arduous, culminating in the Tan Hill to Cat and Fiddle Walk, done in 1952 to celebrate the Jubilee of the Rucksack Club, 120 miles of hill walking between the two highest inns in England in just over fifty-four hours. Interwoven with the stories of the sports of rock climbing and hill walking, is one also of the long, and sometimes bitter, struggles over access and amenities, which have always been a feature of the Peak District. In 1950 it became the first of the country's National Parks and, while this in its turn meant new problems, it has certainly begun to solve many of those of long standing. The climate for sharing the landscape

between the various interests which would like to enjoy it has never been more favourable than it is today.

This is a book which should be on the shelves of everyone interested in climbing in Britain. We are lucky that a man who has played a big part in the story should have written about it while still young enough to retain a modern outlook towards the innovations of the latest generations. It would seem to be expensive, yet the value of money falls so quickly that it is hard to keep one's outlook up-to-date in this respect. There is perhaps a danger that those for whom it will have the maximum interest will be those least able to afford it, but even they are recommended to plunge just this once.

EDWARD C. PYATT

*A Peak to Climb: the story of South African mountaineering.* By J. Burman. Pp. xi, 175. 47 plates; 3 maps. C. Struik, Cape Town, 1966. Price 47s. 6d.

THIS book is published under the auspices of the Mountain Club of South Africa and provides a detailed history of mountaineering in S.A. from its start in 1503, when Admiral Antonio de Saldanha, who had anchored in Table Bay, laboured up Table Mountain only to discover in the view from the top that he had still to round the Cape of Good Hope.

Other early ascents and explorations were made by surveyors including McLear, the Astronomer Royal, whose beacon erected on Table Mountain in 1843 is now reached by thousands by cable-car, but the first recorded ascent of technical difficulty, up one of the summit towers of Toverkop (7225 ft.) near Ladismith, was done alone in 1885 by a country lad who afterwards met such scepticism that he had to repeat it before witnesses; however the scepticism is not surprising for the route repulsed all further attacks for sixty-two years and is now graded as a nasty F (V.S.).

The M.C.S.A. was formed in 1891 in the same year as the New Zealand Alpine Club, so they share the honour of being the oldest British mountaineering clubs overseas, for in Britain, besides the A.C., several clubs, including the S.M.C. and the Cairngorm Club, are older. But the pressures which led to its formation were very different to those felt by the A.C., being mainly the problems of preserving access to Table Mountain despite the growth of the city, its suburbs and its waterworks, of regulating the local corps of guides who led tourists up it, and of providing signposts and a rescue organisation. However this magnificent climbing ground, with delightfully sound, well jointed, vertical rock on the very door-step of the club, has led naturally to the development of a very high standard of rock-climbing, mainly free but latterly artificial too. It can be supplemented by weekend expeditions to other ranges for longer and more varied routes, not only on dry, sunny faces and ridges, but also in the deep abysses and waterfalls of rocky kloofs and the winter snows of the

10,000 ft. Drakensberg; indeed the most readable parts of the book concern the adventures and personalities of the early pioneers in these areas, enlivened by many extracts from their original accounts.

With so many local attractions it is not surprising that membership has now risen to 1800, split into nine regional sections, nor that few S.A. mountaineers have felt impelled to climb elsewhere, though East Africa has seen several expeditions including that of W. C. West (A.C.) the first Englishman to climb Kilimanjaro; and R. Baillie has recently maintained the reputation of S.A. climbing both on Mount Kenya and on the Eiger. (The de Villiers Graaff expedition to Kenya in 1952 seems to have been overlooked.)

This book fulfils a vital function in bringing together many scattered records and memories and is essential reading for anyone particularly interested in S.A. mountaineering, though the detailed records, particularly the more numerous recent ones, are tedious for a casual reader, and non-Springboks would have appreciated a comparative table of S.A. climbing grades (A-F) with other systems. Personally I read it with interest but some irritation at the restriction of paragraphs to an average of four to five lines apiece which, apart from wasting paper, reinforces the impression of scissors and paste composition from the *Journal* of the M.C.S.A.—a handsome publication which I always read with pleasure; and at the style of what little literary paste is employed—‘Fortunately Dr. Stark had no inkling of the fate that lay in store for him three years later (to be fatally wounded at the siege of Ladysmith) when the party left for the Cedarberg.’

There are chapters on lady mountaineers, who have to be really tough in S.A. (one section secretary got caught in a leopard trap near the top of her peak); on mountain rescue; and on the spirit of the hills seen through S.A. eyes. Fuller information about huts and the acquisition of land and rights of access would have been of interest, for many other clubs should be thinking seriously about the latter. More, too, could have been said about the beautiful and unique indigenous mountain flora and the efforts of the club to protect it from fire and invasion by alien weeds.

The plates, several of them in colour, give an excellent impression of the beauty and variety of scenery and rock offered by S.A. mountains; the maps are simple but clear; the index is good but contains no references to plates, and in the captions to some of the plates it is not clear whether the named person is subject or author. The alleged photo of George Londt (who spent a night in the crater of Kilimanjaro in 1925 and misguidedly attempted to forestall scepticism by bringing down the summit record book as evidence) does not portray the same person as appeared in the last issue of the journal. The price is reasonable in view of the plates, but although this is a limited edition of 1200 numbered copies, with the

first seventy-five leather-bound, the cloth binding is of poor quality, being already badly frayed on the review copy.

These criticisms apart, Mr. Burman (who is generously presenting the royalties to the Club) and the M.C.S.A. are to be congratulated on celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary by this publication, which provides ample testimony that without the devoted efforts of the Club's officers much less could have been achieved in the past, and many fewer facilities would have been preserved and created for this and future generations of mountaineers.

H. A. OSMASTON.

*Four Miles High.* By Josephine Scarr. Pp. 188, illustrations. Victor Gollancz, London, 1966. Price 36s.

THIS is a charming and enjoyable book. Essentially it is a very personal account of the two Himalayan expeditions in which the author took part—to Kulu in autumn, 1961, and to West Nepal in spring, 1962. But it is far more than this; interesting and most readable early chapters describe how the author took up climbing and lead on to the fanatical university phase when 'there seemed a great sense of urgency, as though the mountains might disappear at any moment'. Daringly, she attempts to analyse the motives that bring a girl to rock-climb to the standard of X.S. leads, and later to abandon these virtuoso performances in favour of Himalayan pioneering.

The Kulu expedition, made with Barbara Spark, is run on a shoestring. Nevertheless three fine peaks over 20,000 ft. are climbed, and experience gained so that no expedition will ever be quite the same again. Much of the climbing is rock-pioneering of the kind which absorbed the Victorian mountaineers, and indeed in scope and scale this is not unlike a Victorian alpine season.

Four evocative chapters are then devoted to an Indian winter spent teaching in Delhi and touring in the north, highlights being an interview with Nehru and a discussion with the Dalai Lama on the preservation of the culture and religion of exiled Tibetans.

The later chapters, which cover the Ladies' Jagdula expedition are, perhaps inevitably, more conventional. One suspects that even in this party of modest size Jo Scarr is happiest mapping with one companion the unknown upper reaches of the Jagdula Khola, where even now major problems still remain. The exploration by this expedition of the little-known Kagmara Lekh and southern Kanjiroba Himal (where four members and four Sherpas reached a 21,000 ft. summit) make this geographically the most important section of the book.

It should perhaps be mentioned that proceeds from the sale of the book are being given to a small aid project in the Himalayas.

JOHN TYSON.

*The Book of European Skiing.* Edited by Malcolm Milne and Mark Heller. Pp. 304. Illustrated with 32 pp. of colour; 48 pp. of 2-colour; and 224 pp. of black and white photographs. Arthur Barker, 1966. Price 63s.

THIS book seems to me to be a combination of an encyclopedia and an atlas on skiing. I could hardly think of men better suited to produce such a book than the two editors. Malcolm Milne was secretary of the Ski Club of Great Britain for many years and is now secretary of the National Ski Federation. Mark Heller is a first class skier and experienced ski-mountaineer who for years has arranged and led glacier tours for the S.C.G.B. and the Eagle Ski Club.

One may argue that ski-mountaineering is the only aspect of skiing which is of interest to the mountaineer and climber. However, this is not quite the case any more. Modern skiing has changed so much during the last years after the war that the skier who is trained to ski in modern style will be not only much faster, he will also be much safer on his tours. It is to understand this development that one ought to know a little about the other, more piste-bound activities of the skier.

The editors have asked sixteen writers, everyone an expert in his field, to describe all these various sides of the sport. There is no room here to mention them all, but that does not mean that the chapters left out are less worth reading. As an introduction the famous Norwegian, Einar Bergslund, with whom I had the pleasure to ski in his country, quotes Fridtjof Nansen: 'Does it not feel as though the mind is suddenly cleansed of a trying civilisation and smoky city air? . . . It is like something which develops not only the body but also the soul . . .' (written in 1890, before the invention of the motor car and the 'mental uplift'). Richard Hennings gives a comprehensive history: 'From Stone (age) to Stem (turn)'. Most interesting, the three directors of the ski schools in Austria, France and Switzerland give a short and precise description of their methods of teaching. And Maria Goldberger, the only British lady (I believe) to hold the French and the Swiss Ski Instructor's Diploma, writes a critical commentary about this slightly controversial subject.

'The great controversies' are, of course, treated by Sir Arnold Lunn, who is happy to repeat how he got the late Hannes Schneider out of the hands of the Nazis and how he fulfilled his promise again to set, together with Hannes, the course for the Arlberg Kandahar race in St. Anton in 1949.

'War on Skis', by the British member of the Fédération Internationale de Ski, Colonel Robert Readhead, reveals some incidents of fighting on skis in the last war which were new to me, and Isabel Roe and Robin Fedden write about ski-mountaineering, the subject nearest to the heart of the climber.

'A race apart', a caption with a double meaning, is a very actual chapter. Actual, because only a few days before this review was written, a British

girl managed for the first time since the war to finish third in an international race of champions, just fractions of a second slower than the winner.

A race apart are the small band of people who go all out, racing to win honours for their countries. The difference between doing a run for pleasure and racing to win, is about that between driving a family car and taking part in a car world-championship. Tessa Dredge, one of our leading girls in ski racing gives a vivid picture of the nervous strain and the strenuous training and life which the racers have to endure.

James Riddell, author of *The Ski Runs of Switzerland*, *The Ski Runs of Austria* and other books, reports on resorts.

And last but not least, a word about the illustrations. I regard it as a very ambitious adventure to bring out a book with so many coloured photos. I am sure it was only economically possible because the book is published in the States as well. The reproductions are not all of a very high standard, but some are excellent and some of the black and white ones are really outstanding.

If one sees with what care the lay-out of pictures and the selection of the writers has been handled, it seems the more regrettable that quite a number of mistakes have been made in attaching the right caption to the corresponding photo, or even, in the 'acknowledgements', the right photographer's name to the corresponding number of the photo he took. I hope that these faults will be corrected in a second edition. In spite of these mistakes I regard the book as an asset for every mountaineer's book-case. It gives a really comprehensive picture of the skier's approach to the mountains.

W. KIRSTEIN.

*Geiger and the Alps*. By Hermann Geiger. English translation by Beatrice Snell. 114 illustrations. Oscar Bucher, Stollberghalde 16, Lucerne, 1966.

THE greater part of this book consists of technically excellent photographs of the Swiss Alps, taken from Geiger's plane or helicopter by a Zürich professional, upon a plan devised by the distinguished Grindelwald guide, Hermann Steuri. Aerial views as such are something of a common-place in these days, and occasional fine ones were seen in alpine journals as long ago as the early 1900's, from balloons. But a planned collection such as this is of considerable interest and value to the mountaineer, for many pictures bring into true perspective the great routes of the Swiss peaks, in a way that photographs from other mountains may not always achieve. Some groups of minor peaks also are explained in their setting by these aerial viewpoints—the Kreuzberge and the Engelhörner, for instance.

But the real splendour of this book is in what Geiger has done, in supplying isolated communities, in feeding animals, and above all in

his magnificent rescue work among the glaciers. In this account of his years of flying he brings vividly before us the special risks due first to very local air currents and second to the variable and often unpredictable state of the ice or snow on which he had to land. He emphasises that the layman's idea that a helicopter solves all such problems is quite wrong. Not only is the machine more costly initially, but it cannot carry much fuel, and its lack of power makes it even more vulnerable to eddies than Geiger's small planes. But by contrast with his alpine rescues by plane, where, as often as not, seriously injured men or bodies had to be brought down, his first work in the helicopter was to take a doctor to his wife at the Fafleralp in the Lötschental. She was expecting a baby, and it was actually delivered in Geiger's helicopter, with the pilot dividing his time between navigation and passing the instruments to the doctor.

Among the topographical pictures are others which illustrate Geiger's work in detail, one of the most dramatic being that of a trained avalanche dog, with supplies, being lowered on a rope from the helicopter.

A book to buy and to study.

C. DOUGLAS MILNER.

*The Turkish Time Machine.* By Monica Jackson. Pp. 159. Illustrations and end-paper map. Hodder and Stoughton, London. 1966. Price 25s.

THE recent relaxation of restrictions on travel to Eastern Turkey has come at a welcome time when the supply of accessible, attractive, climbable and unhackneyed mountains within a tolerable radius of Britain is getting rather thin. The almost complete isolation of Turkish Kurdistan from the main stream of mountaineering exploration has preserved for the late 1960's a handsome nugget of mountain country which is now being eagerly snapped up.

This is an account of a visit by a party of six (two women and four men) to the Cilo Dağ during the summer of 1965, in the course of which the highest peak Reşko Tepe (4170 m.) was climbed twice, including the first ascent by an all-women party. It also purports to offer an archaeological search for a supposed link between Norse mythology and early peoples of Eastern Turkey (hence the silly title), but that operation fizzled out in something approaching farce. It is likely that the author has coloured the proceedings too highly, but the party seems to have been oddly assorted and to have spent even more time in pursuing diverse ends than is usual in such ventures. However, they enjoyed themselves, they did quite a fair amount of climbing, though not all of it gave them the summits they were after, and they came out without serious mishap.

I found the style rather irritating with what, to me, is an unnecessary and exaggerated dramatisation of the various personal conflicts and contretemps which occurred during the expedition, and an occasional gratuitous injection of vulgarity. Anyone planning a visit to the Cilo Dağ

may wish for more explicit topographic detail and a better map than that provided, and most readers would wish to know more about the Kurds the party encountered and their way of life. But there is much that is informative as well as entertaining in this racy account.

F. SOLARI.

## SHORTER NOTICES

*Rock and Rope.* By Showell Styles. Pp. 174, illustrations. Faber and Faber, London, 1967. Price 25s.

SHOWELL STYLES divides rock climbers into Rabbits and Tigers, and modestly dedicates this book to his 'Fellow Rabbits', i.e. to those whose standards do not soar above Very Difficult. On his own showing, he is a very efficient Rabbit, and claims convincingly that his dread of missing the best in mountaineering steered him away from concentrating merely on technique and nerve—that is, on Tigerism.

One is apt to feel surprise, not unmixed with incredulity, when reading some modern climbing narratives where, despite desperate difficulties or appalling weather, the climber claims to remember every detail of every pitch of a long climb, and to have memorised whole pages of conversation, the latter perhaps embellished with crudities such as a small boy might scribble on a wall. Not so with Showell Styles, who is as practised a writer as he is a mountaineer: his accounts of difficulties encountered and overcome ring true and he is not afraid to admit to an occasional weakness on his own part.

Most of the climbs described are in the British Isles, but one of the best chapters, 'The Odd Spot', deals with wartime ventures—Mount Carmel, where he was dive-bombed by vultures for trespassing on their preserves; and Malta, where the location of an unexploded bomb on a cliff face gave him a chance climb of some novelty. He was accompanied by a bomb-disposal officer and another naval rank; neither was much good as a climber and as they were hung about with boxes of gelignite and detonators, Styles watched their antics on the rocks with bated interest. Probably both sides judged the other to be slightly mad, but it all ended happily—they went, found, and exploded the bomb without being blown off the cliff face themselves.

'*Felix Austria*'; vol. II, *Zillertal Alps*; vol. IV, *Pitztal, East and West*. By Philip Tallantire. Austrian Alpine Verein, 26, Old Bond Street, London, 1966.

THE first volume of this series was noted in *A. J.* 70. 352; the two new volumes now ready are arranged by numbered huts, so that the reader can find out what he can do from each, and there is a cross-index of peaks

and the relevant hut numbers. Each volume has an introduction, which in vol. II includes notes on mineral wealth, fauna and flora, and even ethnology and legends. The handy size of the volumes (7 in. × 5 in.), the illustrations and the details given of each expedition described should make them very acceptable to mountain travellers in the regions dealt with.

*The Sea and the Snow.* By Philip Temple. Pp. 188, illustrations. Cassell Australia Ltd., Victoria, 1966. Price 36s.

THIS book narrates, at greater length, the story told by Warwick Deacock in *A. J.* 70. 273—the ascent of Big Ben, the highest point of Heard Island, in the Antarctic regions, in 1964–65. The 4000-mile journey in the *Patanela*, a 63-ft. schooner, with Tilman as skipper of the boat, occupies half the book; the climbing of the peak was accomplished in icy conditions and very strong winds.

*At Grips with Jannu.* By Jean Franco and Lionel Terray. Translated by Hugh Merrick. Pp. 192; illustrations. Victor Gollancz, London, 1967. Price 42s.

THE French edition of this book was reviewed in the *Alpine Journal* for May 1966 and an English translation is welcome. There is no need here to extol the achievement in climbing Jannu; it was certainly one of the most remarkable feats of climbing to date and the book makes exciting reading.

*The Arrow Book of Climbing.* By Showell Styles. Pp. 192. Illustrations and diagrams. Arrow Books, Ltd., London, 1967. Price 5s.

THIS is one of a series of handbooks on various sports and other interests. The author is a well-known writer on mountaineering and has produced a useful short compendium of advice on climbing. The book is in two parts; the first deals with practical methods of rock-climbing (including artificial), and of snow and ice work; the second part is on theoretical matters—route-finding; the weather; equipment; types of mountain surface, and so on. The writer's ample experience, both at home and abroad, makes him a reliable guide.

*Everest: the West Ridge.* By Thomas F. Hornbein. Pp. 200. Numerous illustrations. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966. Price £6. 6. 0.

THIS splendidly produced volume arrived too late for detailed review here; it will be the subject of a further notice in the next *Alpine Journal*. But readers may be glad to know of the book's appearance in England, for it has been available in the United States for some while, in the Sierra Club Exhibit-Format Series.

## ANDEAN JOURNALS AND YEAR-BOOKS

The following are the main items of interest in South American publications received since the last note on these in *A. J.* 70. 175.

## PERU

*Revista Peruana de Andinismo* (Journal of the Club Andino Peruano and Club Andinista Cordillera Blanca), No. 7 (1964-65).

Summary of Peruvian and foreign expeditions to the Peruvian Andes in the years 1964 and 1965. (This is a most valuable and authoritative survey, with photographs, of activities in all regions during the two years under review.)

Andean Statistics. List of ascents in the Cordillera Huayhuash from 1936 to 1965. (56 separate summits are listed, and the score of 'firsts' is Austria 15; Italy 9; Switzerland 7; Germany 5; Argentina and Mexico 4 each; Peru 3; U.S.A. 2; Scotland, New Zealand, Chile, Japan, one each.) The U.S. first ascents were Yerupaja Grande and Jirishhanca Norte; the New Zealand, Rondoy Grande (with Britain second); and the Scottish, Yerupaja Este (Slesser).

List of eighty peaks in the Cordillera Huayhuash still virgin in 1965 (only two, Siulá Chico<sup>1</sup> and Sarapo Norte, are given as over 6000 m.).

The issue also contains a note on 'Pioneers in the Peruvian Andes' by Evelio Echevarría, a list of available maps, and at the end, sketch maps of the Peruvian Cordilleras reprinted from the *Peruvian Times* of May 20, 1966.

## CHILE

*Revista Andina* (Journal of the Chilean Andean and Ski Federation), No. 87 (June, 1965).

Expedition to Mercedario (6780 m.) by the Club Andino de Chile, March, 1964.

Chilean expedition to Aconcagua by the Güssfeldt route.

Chilean geological expedition to Northern Chile and ascent of the Parinacota and Pomerape volcanoes, October, 1964.

No. 88 (December, 1965).

Review of the Chilean Andean season 1964-65. This includes an account of the eighth successful ascent of Juncal (6110 m.) which discovered records left by the Bonacossa-Gervasutti expedition of 1934.

<sup>1</sup> A German party made the first ascent of Siulá Chico in June, 1966.

## ARGENTINA

*La Montaña* (Journal of the Argentinian Mountaineering Federation).  
No. 6 (January, 1965).

Expedition across the Patagonian Ice-cap (1960-61), by Eric Shipton.  
Ascent of Aconcagua by the Polish route (1964), by Mario O. Quesada.  
Ascent of Cerros Gorra Blanca, Cagliero, and Volcan Lautaro, by  
Augusto Mengelle.

No. 7 (December, 1965).

Argentiniens on the summit of FitzRoy (January, 1965). A short  
account of the successful ascent by Comesaña and Fonrouge of the  
'supercanaleta' on the northern flank.

First ascent of Mount Kennedy, by James W. Whittaker.

First ascent of Cerro Mellizos (Chilean Patagonia), by Pedro Skvarca.

T. CROMBIE.