

## REVIEWS

*Unkilled for so long: the Memoirs of Sir Arnold Lunn.* Pp. 175. Frontispiece. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1968. Price 25s.

It is doubtful if Lunn could write a dull book if he tried and this volume, which celebrates his eightieth birthday, is a very readable digest of his life's principal activities. If there is not much in it directly touching the world of the *Alpine Journal*, there has been, as he says in his final chapter, little of enduring value in his life that has had no link with mountains.

Some readers will find topics discussed that have already been dealt with by Lunn in other books; but it is well to be reminded of Lunn's battles over international ski-ing, or with the Olympic Games Committee and the question of recognition of totalitarian governments. Both in these matters, as in his stand for religious and moral values in the world of today, Lunn has much to say that is to the point.

One feature in his character is very apparent, both here and in other writings: Lunn, doughty controversialist though he is, is not malicious; he fights fair and if, as the 'blurb' suggests, there are some who will be enraged at his views, they will do well to ask themselves if the faults are all on his side. For Lunn has thought seriously about the things on which he feels deeply, and those who have engaged him in controversy have not always emerged as winner.

Members of the Alpine Club, along with a host of others, both skiers and climbers, will salute Lunn and wish him health and happiness, and a lot more birthdays, and some more memoirs.

T.S.B.

*On My Home Ground.* By Gwen Moffat. Pp. 256. Illustrations. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 1968. Price 35s.

READERS of Gwen Moffat's first book, *Space Below My Feet* (A.J. 66. 413) will know that the writer has led a hectic and unconventional life, and the present volume may be considered as a continuation of the first. The rough living and arduous climbing are all there, but though mountaineering fills a good space in the book, there is much more, however conscious one may be of the mountain background. One chapter is devoted to her cats, and indeed these crop up again and again throughout the book. To anyone who had thought, from *Space Below My Feet*, that the author must be a tough and formidable person, it is good to find that her cats soon had her trained in the ways they wanted, even to returning early from a climb in order to feed them. Though Gwen Moffat tries to claim, 'I was very firm with the cats' (and admittedly

she did decide to have her favourite, Jet, spayed after her thirty-seventh kitten), the impression gains on the reader that she was generally wax in their paws.

Her first book showed that Gwen Moffat was a vivid and compelling writer when describing a climb, and this capacity is well in evidence in her latest book. The account of the traverse of the Meije (she had gone to the Dauphiné thinking, wrongly, of them as little mountains, because less lofty than the Pennine Alps) carries one along admirably, and another chapter, 'Blizzard Country' (the Lake District in winter) is first rate, as is the later incident when she, her husband and her daughter rescue a sheep and its lamb from an awkward chimney on Pavey—the details of the technique of capturing sheep on a precipice are compressed, yet one can share in the whole experience. Scotland, Snowdonia, Cumberland, Derbyshire, the cliffs of Land's End, all have their place in a volume that can be read with delight.

T.S.B.

*Because it is There: Famous Mountaineers, 1840-1940.* By Walter Unsworth. Pp. 144, illustrations. Victor Gollancz Ltd., London. 1968. Price 21s.

THIS book consists of twenty-four studies of individual climbers (in some cases, such as the Walkers, of a family) notable in their varying ways as contributing something to the sport of mountaineering at different stages of its development. The author has made his own choice of persons, and freely admits that some famous names are missing. That is fair enough; a biographical history of mountaineering would be a very massive work.

The book is adapted from a series of articles in *The Climber*: the bulk of the mountaineers discussed are British, but Ferdinand Imseing has a chapter, as do Guido Rey and Hans Lauper. The book is aimed at the non-climbing reader and the names selected are not necessarily the most famous climbers, but the intention seems to be to show that a varied lot of people respond to the challenge of the mountains.

Mr. Unsworth has obviously read the standard works and being himself a climber, is able to interpret what he has read. One feels that the book would have gained in value could a short bibliography have been added to each chapter. And an index is always desirable for this type of book.

There is no need to indulge in fault-finding, however; a few criticisms must suffice. Should one say (p. 14) that by 1865 Mont Blanc had been climbed *hundreds* of times? 'Scores' might be a better word. Whymper's injudicious seventh attempt on the Matterhorn, in 1865, was on the south flank, not the east, though he intended crossing the latter from a point high up on the Furggen ridge (p. 33). On p. 63, Mummery's rock climbing ability is specially mentioned, but it is well to remember that,

in the opinion of Norman Collie, what Mummery really excelled in was icemanship.

Hermann Buhl (p. 87) was an Austrian, not a German. To refer (p. 92) to the early Everest men of the 1920s as 'public-school climbers with lots of courage and precious little else' is frankly absurd: Mallory, Finch, Somervell, Odell, were all top-rankers: Hazard and Beetham were among the best known mountaineers we had at the time.

T.S.B.

*The Baron of Piccadilly.* By Raymond Fitzsimons. Pp. 192, illustrations. Geoffrey Bles, London, 1967. Price 30s.

It is over thirty years since Dr. Monroe Thorington's study of Albert Smith, *Mont Blanc Sideshow*, was published and a modern biography of this original member of the Alpine Club is opportune. Though his Mont Blanc 'Entertainment' was the most prominent and successful of Smith's ventures (it ran for two thousand performances and brought him £30,000), it was by no means all he managed to cram into his short life of under forty-four years. His presence as an original member of the A.C. was not especially welcome (see *A. J.* 62. 30), as he was rather widely disliked for his exhibitionism, though personally of an amiable character.

Mr. Fitzsimons brings out the Bohemianism and indeed vulgarity that was characteristic of Albert Smith, as Thackeray thought it to be of Charles Dickens. Smith had been trained to become a doctor, but was at heart a writer, if of a Grub Street type. He wrote several novels, though not very good ones, for his real literary gifts lay more in reporting. He was a born showman, like his friend P. T. Barnum of America; he liked the theatre and was friendly with Dickens and others of the Dickens circle, though quite the reverse of Dickens as regards dandified dress. Smith was a hardy traveller, who reported what he had himself seen, and did not glean material from other travellers' books. Indeed, he rather distinguished himself by de-bunking some of the uncritical writing of other voyagers; when gazing at the Rhine at Coblenz, Smith brushed aside the popular but legendary world of magic caves and lovely nymphs, and reported a bed of black mud relieved by mosaics of old shoes and dilapidated pipkins; while Pompey's Pillar at Alexandria did not evoke for him the names of Ptolemy or Herodotus but, prosaically, he noticed painted on it, in large letters, the names of G. Button and W. Thompson of Sunderland.

It is the more remarkable, therefore, that in his narrative of his ascent of Mont Blanc in 1851, Smith exaggerated immensely, although he had suspected, and rightly, that the Chamonix guides had made it their interest to keep up the idea of a very formidable undertaking, requiring many guides. Erasmus Galton in 1850 had assured Smith that there was

little in the climb (though Galton had felt the altitude). Smith's own near-collapse on the mountain was clearly due to his being completely out of training, but it affected his outlook so that his tale abounds in absurd exaggerations. Still, this was not unknown among other and better climbers of those days, when mountaineering was in its infancy. Smith visited Chamonix more than once after his ascent of Mont Blanc, and even went up to the opening of the hut on the Grands Mulets; but he was not interested in mountaineering as such. As a populariser of Mont Blanc and a public entertainer, and as a traveller, he earned a notable place, and this latest biography, though it does not replace Dr. Thorington's work, is a welcome addition to the study of Albert Smith and his times.

T.S.B.

*A Woman's Reach. Mountaineering Memoirs.* By Nea Morin. 288 pp. 24 pages of plates. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968. 50s.

MANY mountaineers will be grateful to Mrs Morin for putting on record the story of her climbing life. She started serious climbing in 1922, in Austria, with Hannes Schneider, later to be famous as a skier. There followed a series of Alpine seasons, chiefly with French friends from the Groupe de Haute Montagne, one of whose leaders she married. Then came the war. Hitherto she had climbed little in Britain, apart from the early exploration of Harrison's Rocks in Kent, but during the war she was often in Wales, climbing with the then leaders of Welsh climbing, among them Menlove Edwards and John Barford. This was the period of some pioneering on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, and of her eponymous route on Clogwyn y Grochan, which has since been one of the favourite routes of the Llanberis Pass.

Jean Morin's death in an aircraft shot down in 1943 left her a widow with two young children, but in the post-war years she continued to climb actively both in Britain and in the Alps, and introduced her children to climbing with great success. Some of her best Alpine climbs were done in the 1950's with her daughter, or with Janet Adam Smith, her collaborator in translations of several mountaineering books. In 1959 she was a member of the party which unsuccessfully attempted Ama Dablam in the Himalayas. An injury just before, aggravated by premature activity during the expedition, caused lasting damage to a hip, and left Mrs Morin severely handicapped. The book ends with this, although it has not been the end of Mrs Morin's climbing, as a 1967 picture happily demonstrates.

These memoirs are first and foremost a record of fine climbs, told in the kind of detail that makes them come alive for other mountaineers. But they have a wider significance. Mrs Morin has been one of the leaders in the development of women's climbing. No longer the rare

feat of an eccentric few, women's climbing is now a normal and accepted feature of the mountain scene. That this is so, and that first women's ascents or manless climbs do not today seem especially interesting, is a measure of the achievement of Mrs Morin and her friends. The appendix to this book giving a list of first or early feminine ascents reminds how recent these developments are.

Significant too is the theme which runs through this book, of the internationalism of mountaineering, Mrs Morin has been as at home in French as in British mountaineering circles. One of the most entertaining parts of the book is the glimpses it gives of the pre-war GHM, gay, informal, and charming.

But the international theme is rightly subsumed in the wider theme of mountain friendship. Mountain friends are not British friends or French friends; they are just friends. Mrs Morin writes: 'Among the great benefits that mountaineering brings are the lifelong friendships, the combination of physical and mental fitness, and an acute awareness and appreciation of the value of existence.' It has been said before, but it is true, and is not only said but demonstrated by this book; and friendship is mentioned first.

Above all this book is a tribute to the happiness of mountaineering. Mrs Morin is honest, she does not pretend that it is all uniformly happy. There are the climbs that go wrong, the friends who are killed. But there is no doubt where the balance has fallen for Mrs Morin, and through this book she generously shares her happiness with her readers.

A. K. RAWLINSON.

*The Mountain World* 1966/67. Pp. xii, 228. Illustrations. Edited by Malcolm Barnes. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1968. Price 50s.

THE Hindu Kush figure in three articles here, by Arnost Černik, H. Edmundson and M. Schmuck, while W. Onishtchenko deals with Khan Tengri in the Central Tien Shan; the South-west buttress was climbed for the first time by a Russian party in 1964. The German Greenland expedition to the Staunings Alps in 1966 is described by Karl M. Herrligkoffer, and Erik Hoff provides a valuable survey of mountaineering in Greenland from 1870 to 1966. A more unusual region is dealt with by Malcolm Slessor and Luiz Minchetti, 'The Coastal Ranges of Brazil'. How many people realised that serious peaks, up to 3000 m., existed in Brazil? Most of us probably thought of Brazil as a vast country (larger than the U.S.A. excluding Alaska) made up of the huge Amazon basin and the Matto Grosso.

Other articles concern the Cordillera Blanca, Peru, and Aconcagua: and Anders Bolinder, a big contributor to this volume, writes of the exploration of the Southern Puna de Atacama, in the Argentine-Chilean Andes.

Walter Amstutz writes of Mount Kenya, 'Africa's Finest Peak', and it may be noted that illustration 25 has the names of Batian and Nelion reversed; Nelion is that on the left and Batian to its right. And; plate 28, Batian is in fact visible behind Nelion.

The American Antarctic Expedition, that climbed the Vinson Massif and Mount Tyree in the Sentinel Range, is described by S. Silverstein and Barry Corbet, and the book closes with a very useful series of tables of climbs in the Himalaya and Karakoram, 1965-66; in the Pamir and Tien Shan, 1960-66; and of the world's highest ranges and summits.

T.S.B.

*The Climber's Bedside Book.* By Showell Styles. Pp. 256. Faber and Faber, London, 1968. Price 28s.

SHOWELL STYLES is an industrious author, both of historical novels and of books on mountaineering. As long ago as 1951 he produced a *Mountaineer's Weekend Book*, and the present volume may be regarded in somewhat the same light. But it is not an anthology; he writes, appropriately in a bedside book, of sleeping quarters (usually uncomfortable ones); of climbers 'dreams' (i.e. ambitions) that have come true; of ghosts and yetis; and for those who may want to verify some mountain or personal name, there are two chapters listing alphabetically fifty famous names in mountaineering history (only the dead are considered) and one hundred notable mountains.

Everyone can play at the game of wondering why this name has been included and that one omitted, and some of the potted biographies (they average less than a page apiece) are almost too brief to be of much use. To those so minded, the list of one hundred mountains may be searched for errors, but this might prove a lengthy job, for the author has read widely. Amne Machin (p. 218) might have been shown more correctly, since it was climbed in 1960 and its height ascertained as 23,491 ft. Everest (p. 224) still retains the discarded figure of 29,002 ft. in height; and (p. 228) the Ganges does not have its source near Mount Kailas.

T.S.B.

*Mountaineering.* By Alan Blackshaw. Pp. 542. Illustrations, maps and line drawings. Revised edition. Penguin Books Ltd., London, 1968. Price 18s. 6d. And in hard-back version: Kaye and Ward, Ltd., London, 1968. Price 42s.

THE first edition of this book was reviewed at length in 1966 (*A.J.* 71, 167). In this reprint the author has incorporated essential changes affecting safety (including improvements in equipment such as pitons), and has revised some of the appendices.

Although it is a pity that the hard back version is so expensive, 542

pages is good value for two guineas, and every aspect of mountaineering, from hill walking to Alpine climbing is catered for. This is a standard work and a fresh edition is to be welcomed.

T.S.B.

*Tell me, Mr. Frank.* By Arthur Frank, F.B.O.A. Pp. 24. Illustrations. Charles Frank Ltd., Glasgow, 1968. 3s. 6d.

IN this booklet, Mr. Frank describes in an interesting and useful way the range of binoculars and monoculars at present available on the British market, with price ranges. It would certainly be worthwhile reading for expeditions or others needing this equipment.

A.B.

*'Felix Austria': vol. iii. Niederen and Hohen Tauern.* By Philip Tallantire. Pp. 250, illustrations. Austrian Alpine Verein, 1968.

THIS volume completes the first four of the series, already noted in *A. J.* 70. 352 and 72. 175. Two further volumes are under consideration. As a hut to hut touring guide, the book seems excellent; the huts are arranged alphabetically in their different regions, and each is illustrated by a photograph. It is a rather bulkier volume than its forerunners, but for anyone touring these areas, it should be very useful.

T.S.B.

*Bernina Alps.* By R. G. Collomb and J. O. Talbot. Pp. 141. Illustrations. West Col Productions, Reading, 1968. Price 30s.

ONE of a series of three guide-books to the Bernina and Bregaglia mountains of Eastern Switzerland, this is a long awaited guide-book and, as the authors point out—'the first English guide-book for fifty years' to this exceptionally good snow and ice area. The choice of route descriptions, 100 in all, cannot be faulted and should whet the appetite of the expert and novice alike. The introduction gives useful reference to the Swiss and German guide-books and maps of the area and a wise note of warning as to the overcrowding in the huts.

There has been a lot of discussion in the A.C.G. committee and elsewhere as to the accuracy of guide-books and the responsibility of guide-book writers. West Col are obviously aware of this and, in addition to the accepted French system of grading, have further qualified certain of the route descriptions. After the preamble for the route a symbol has been added to denote that it is either (a) recommended, (b) of no particular interest with poor rock or objective danger, and (c) that the information or description is not guaranteed. This is a good system and similar to that practised in the A.C.G. *Bulletin*, but leaves some doubt as to the authenticity of the undesignated descriptions.

As with the A.C./A.C.G. series guide to the Bernese Oberland the

authors have departed from the use of diagrams and relied on photographs to illustrate the routes. These are plentiful enough and preferable to diagrams, but unfortunately the reproduction does not do justice to the magnificence of the peaks. The guide is stoutly bound in red cloth.

DERRICK BURGESS

*Selected Climbs in the Pennine Alps.* Vol. 1: Saas Fee. Zermatt and Zinal. Vol. II: Arolla and Western ranges. Second edition. Translated and adapted from the S.A.C. Guide, with additional material, by Robin Collomb. Pp. 290. The Alpine Club. 1968. Prices 37s. 6d. and 28s. 0d.

IN the first place I must congratulate the Editors on the handy and extremely pleasant pocket-size format: in particular the plastic covers are extremely practical protection.

The choice of routes seems excellent apart from two small exceptions: nothing is mentioned in the Grandes Murailles group, nor in the rather less important Mont Fort—Rosa Blanche area. I must also congratulate the author for his very clear and condensed descriptions. The photographs with routes shown on them can be very useful and are often easier to interpret than sketches. However, the choice of photographs does not strike me as always being a very happy one and I await with interest another edition which besides being as well executed will show the mountains better: from this point of view Vol. I is an improvement on Vol. II.

All advice at the beginning of Vol. I is very useful although the author might have been rather more positive about the use of the rope on glaciers: falls into crevasses need not be more than minor incidents, without risk, if the correct rope procedures are used and in particular if there is very little slack between each climber. On the other hand, I do not accept the utility of wearing a protective helmet for all routes, particularly snow ones, with the exception, of course, of very hard climbs or ones exposed to falling snow or ice. I am glad to see that the addendum to the second volume recognises the value of ice screws which are very useful in ninety per cent of cases and not very expensive.

I should perhaps indicate the sections which seemed to me incomplete or false:

### *Volume I*

(a) In the Zermatt valley. Only the local inhabitants can use cars above St. Niklaus.

(b) No indication is given as to whether huts are on the telephone (very useful for reservations).

(c) The Moiry hut is over thirty years old, not new as stated. The bus stops on the dam itself but it is possible to take a car as far as the foot of the glacier.

(*d*) From Zermatt to Arolla it might be worth describing also the traverse by the Cols de Valpelline and Mont Brûlé which is very interesting.

(*e*) It should be mentioned that the Mischabelgrat on the Täschhorn can be dangerously corniced on the middle part, as well as lower down.

(*f*) The North face of the Dent Blanche was climbed last winter by Camille Bournissen, solo, who followed the Vaucher route except at the end where he went onto the North ridge on account of better rock.

(*g*) An afternoon descent of the N.N.W. ridge of the Ober Gabelhorn (route No. 153) is not advisable on account of the risk of falling stones. It is better to go down by the Arbengrat, Mont Durand and the Col Durand.

(*h*) A better and shorter approach to Le Besso is to go horizontally to the north-west from the Mountet hut, past the foot of the large rock buttress and rejoin the Besso glacier by scree and moraines (routes Nos. 164 and 165).

(*i*) The Moiry area is very useful for acclimatisation. For example, the North face of the Pointes de Mourti gives excellent glacier training. The relatively low altitude of the Aiguille de la Lé or of the Couronne de Bréonna gives climbing when the high routes are snowed up, and good climbers will take direct the little gendarmes of the South ridge of the latter which give some magnificent and difficult pitches.

### *Volume II*

(*j*) One should mention the Cabane de Prazfleuri above Chargeur in the Val de Dix, which is privately owned, cheap, and always open. Wood is available and cooking facilities. About forty places. It is situated very close to Pt. 2662 on the C.N. to the west of Mont Blava.

(*k*) As for (*b*) above.

(*l*) In my experience the Marcel Brunet hut is never locked and one can go up to it by car.

(*m*) There is no justification for saying that the North face of the Pigne d'Arolla is not a good climb (p. 81).

(*n*) On pages 130-134 and 141 it should be Bourg St. Pierre and not Bourg St. Maurice.

(*o*) In recent years I have very often seen the remains of tremendous ice avalanches at the foot of route No. 94 on the Combin de Valsorey. One must advise the greatest prudence and a very serious study of conditions before undertaking this route.

(*p*) In summer I would recommend going up Mont Velan by the ridge from the Col de la Gouille and descending by route No. 102.

In concluding this friendly and I hope constructive criticism, I should say that route-finding ability in the mountains grows only with

practice and that it is better to keep an observant eye when climbing than to keep it buried in a book no matter how good the latter is.

DENIS BERTHOLET.

*Engelhörner and Salbitschijen.* (Including Wellhörner and Scheideggwetterhorn).

A selection of popular and recommended climbs compiled by Jeremy O. Talbot. Pp. 107. 10 diagrams and 2 maps. West Col Productions, Reading. 1968. Price 25s.

THE publication of this selection of popular and recommended climbs for these two adjacent, but of different character, Swiss areas will undoubtedly attract a considerable number of British climbers. Hitherto very few British parties have climbed on the Engelhörner with their many fine and varied limestone routes, some being, surprisingly, of considerable length and magnitude. Salbitschijen with its classical South ridge has been visited by British parties more often; since the early fifties a number of parties have spoken in glowing terms of its magnificent granite faces and ridges.

The Engelhörner are situated extremely close to Grindelwald, where, in the past, numerous British parties have frustratedly awaited the high peaks of the Bernese Oberland to come into condition, when after a mere three hours total drive and easy walk they could have been at the excellent, perfectly situated Engelhörner hut. The routes, some being only minutes away from the hut, quickly dry and in certain cases are even safely negotiable in bad weather.

Salbitschijen can be approached from Chamonix via Martigny and the Rhone valley to Göschenen in six hours driving followed by a terrifying two-man box cable car trip to within half an hour's walk of the recently renovated hut. Perhaps justifiably the guide book does not mention the cable car in the description of the hut approach.

This guide-book admirably presents routes of all standards of difficulty and length to satisfy all levels of experience. The diagrams are clear, far better than those in the original Swiss publications; and the writer's descriptions, eighty-one in number, are concise, many of the routes obviously having been followed by him. In criticism, I feel that a description of the descent from the Kingspitz in the Engelhörner certainly justifies a short section as it is undoubtedly tricky in adverse weather to those unfamiliar with the peak.

CLAUDE DAVIES

*Selected Climbs in the Dauphiné Alps and Vercors* (Alpine Club Guide Books, Vol. 4). Edited by E. A. Wrangham and J. Brailsford, 1967. Price 28s.

OVER the years no district of the Alps has exercised a greater appeal for me than the Dauphiné. But as a reviewer, let me confess right away that I have no first-hand knowledge of the Vercors. But to return to the

subject of Dauphiné, it is not that I know the district really well but every time I go there I come away with the feeling that these mountains provide what I really ask for in the way of mountaineering.

In comparison with other districts in the Alps the Dauphiné is hard country. Access to the main peaks often involves long, tough walking. Most of the routes are serious undertakings and some of them are very hard indeed. If you want to pass from one valley to another on foot you cannot do so easily. Only think of the passage from La Grave to La Bérarde over the Brèche de la Meije. The great attraction of this district is that somehow or other it has managed to remain almost nineteenth century in atmosphere. Although it is true that in the holiday season La Grave, La Bérarde and Ailefroide are popular centres for campers, these places are not resorts of commercial tourism. There are no palace hotels; and as yet it must be one of the few districts which is almost undesecrated by string railways. Most of the visitors are French holiday makers who go there for the genuine love of camping and walking in the mountains, and on the whole a pleasanter and better behaved group of people it would be hard to find.

This latest addition to the Alpine Club series of Guides to the Alps is mainly a translation and adaptation of the admirable G.H.M. Guide to the Dauphiné, with the addition of a new section on the Vercors. The editors have performed a notable service to mountaineers in their wise selection of the best climbs in the two districts for description. For those who can read French, however, the splendid G.H.M. guide to the Dauphiné should still be consulted. The selection has been carefully made and covers routes of all degrees of difficulty. There is an excellent opening section on the huts and principal passes and this is followed by detailed descriptions of all the most worthwhile climbs in the district.

The reviewer is unable to vouch for the accuracy of the description of the harder climbs, but judging from those of the routes he knows he feels that this guide can safely be relied upon by newcomers to the district. In one important particular however some criticism may seem justified. The description of the classic traverse of La Meije is taken from the G.H.M. guide and this was written before the great rock fall in April 1964 which changed the profile of the Brèche Zsigmondy. Although this and its effect upon the route is referred to, and a diagram of the new profile of the Brèche is given on page 53, with the new routes indicated on it, there is no clear description in the text of the way in which the traverse of the Brèche is now usually made.

I have always regretted that the G.H.M. guide did not include that fascinating little outlying group of peaks—the Aiguilles d'Arves. Although not strictly speaking Dauphiné mountains, one tends to regard them as a part of this climbing ground. They are worth visiting when poor weather makes climbing on the great peaks impracticable.

Perhaps a future edition of this guide might include a section on the Aiguilles d'Arves.

CHARLES WARREN.

*Maritime Alps: Vésubie basin and Argentera.* A selection of popular and recommended climbs compiled by Robin G. Collomb. Pp. 100. 13 diagrams and 1 map. West Col Productions, Reading, 1968. Price 25s.

THE Alpes Maritimes are not often frequented by English climbers. Probably this has been, in part, due to the fact that up to the present time there has been no guide-book in English on the region.

Now, this omission has been rectified, and we must acknowledge our debt to West Col Alpine Guides in general and to Robin Collomb in particular, who has so admirably compiled this guide-book, which he states has been based on the works of Dr. Vincent Paschetta of Nice. This gentleman has played a most important part in making known the beauty of this superb region.

However, the present guide-book, presumably owing to space, deals with the range only in part, and then mainly with the French side. If the ground were to be fully covered, a much larger volume would be needed. On the Italian side some very fine new difficult routes have been opened, such as:

Corno Stella, North face, three separate routes.

Route one: 600 metres E.D. direct to summit (32 hours with bivouac).

„ two: 600 metres T.D. (9 hours).

„ three: 600 metres T.D. (9 hours).

Guides Chain, Lup, Direct South face, E.D. (70 pegs).

Since the publication of Dr. Paschetta's guide-book in 1965, many difficult new routes have been opened on the French side, e.g.:

Cougourde, Direttissima South face, E.D. Direct North-west face to summit 3, T.D. sup.

Cayre des Erps, Direct West face, E.D.

One notices here and there that the guide-book mentions a route without giving the itinerary. Thus on page 95—the South-east ridge of the Corno Stella (T.D.) Also the West face of the Cayre des Erps (E.D.); likewise the West Buttress of the Cayre des Erps (T.D. sup.). No mention is made of the Spigolo South-west Direct on the Cougourde as well as many other routes on this famous mountain.

It is highly desirable therefore that when a second edition appears, it will show these new routes. The writer respectfully suggests that Mr. Collomb consults with Jean-Marie Morisset<sup>1</sup>, the French guide who was mainly responsible for Dr. Paschetta's guide-book. He, more than anyone, knows most about the French and Italian sides, and Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Marie Morisset, guide, St. Dalmas de Valdeblore, Tel: 514.

Paschetta pays due acknowledgement to him on pages 5 and 171 of his guide-book.

In the second edition it might be helpful to mention that there are two very fine, important, varied, and well-equipped rock climbing schools, established by the Compagnie des Guides of the Haute Vésubie<sup>2</sup>. They are: I—a series of limestone rocks, ten minutes above the Auberge des Murès at St. Dalmas de Valdeblore, and II—in the Vallon de Salée, eight kilometres from St. Martin de Vésubie on the route to Boréon. These rocks are gneiss. All routes are fully pegged, painted in red, showing the gradings (A.D. to E.D.).

Mention might also be made that permanently well-organised rescue teams of qualified mountain guides of the C.R.S. (Centre Républicain Sécurité) are stationed in St. Martin de Vésubie.

It is to be hoped that more British parties will pay a visit to this region, which has ample camping sites amidst the most beautiful surroundings.

RICHARD AYRTON.

*Scafell Group: F. & R.C.C. Guide.* By G. Oliver and L. J. Griffin. Pp. 172, New edition. Published by Fell & Rock Climbing Club, 1967. Price not stated.

SCAFELL, the proudest of Lakeland crags, appears in purple. The second of the new series of F. & R.C.C. guide-books in the modern idiom continues the promise shown by *Langdale*. The descriptions are humanised and the stranger can tell whether a climb is worthwhile as such, or if it is merely a gap-filler. Clear and concise text, yet readable (I particularly like, 'In the true traditions of a non-competitive sport, two rival parties raced for the Central Pillar, the last of the Lakeland "plums". Crew's party won, after a dawn start, whilst the others found first class consolation prizes'.) make the book a useful and desirable addition to a library shelf. The excellent (as usual) sketches add to the value on the fells, and Heaton-Cooper, Oliver and Griffin all deserve congratulation, as does the editor, Wilkinson.

A. J. J. MOULAM.

<sup>2</sup> Compagnie des Guides, St. Martin de Vésubie, Tel: 82.