

REVIEWS.

Mountaineering Ventures. By C. E. Benson. London: T. C. and E. C. Jack, Ltd., 1927. Illustrated. 6s.

MR. BENSON has satisfied very well the needs of the 'Real Adventure Series' by writing a book dealing with mountaineering on some of the greater ranges of the world. It should possess a wide appeal, especially to the adventurously minded youth of the country. The Alps, the Caucasus, Norway, Corsica, New Zealand, and Everest all find a place.

The method chosen is that of selecting passages from the literature of the craft, then commenting on and criticising the climbing details. This naturally limits Mr. Benson's own descriptive field, yet his comments and criticisms are often shrewd and to the point, whilst he is at great pains to explain his material and elaborate his points.

The most serious criticism we have to make is that the tragically sensational is introduced far too often. But we suspect that Messrs. Jack, the publishers, are more to blame on this point than is Mr. Benson. The public wants tragedy and the sensational—according to publishers—and it is up to Mr. Benson to supply it.

The story of the Matterhorn is told first, and includes some interesting character studies. Here the criticisms are severe. Publicity is always liable to distort the truth, and petty incidents of temper and temperament, that probably amounted to little in the minds of the actors—pardon the word—in this drama, are magnified out of all proportion. By no possibility could the stones dislodged from the summit of the Matterhorn by Whymper and Croz have struck the ascending Italians, and it is scarcely fair to impute to them a senseless attempt at homicide.

The title of the book demands that Alpine guideless climbing should be included. It is not. Perhaps Mr. Benson has no sympathy for the 'Ces Satanés Führerlose.' No mention is made of Mummery's magnificent and terrible 'venture' on the N. face of the Aiguille du Plan. Mr. Young's route on the Brouillard Ridge is described as a first ascent, though it was in reality only the first ascent from the Col Emile Rey. The first ascent was made by those admirable mountaineers the Signori Gugliermina *without guides*¹ direct up the W. face of the Pic Luigi Amedeo—a route still un-repeated. No mention is made either of their Innominata route up Mont Blanc or their splendid traverse of the Col de l'Aiguille Verte. Guideless climbs by such parties as Messrs. Wicks, Wilson, and Bradby, or Messrs. Raeburn and Ling find no place either, although excellent accounts have been written. Perhaps the most thrilling chapter is that describing Mr. Young's ascent of the S. face

¹ An excellent 'porter,' Joseph Brocherel, was present.—*Editor.*

of the Täschehorn, whilst in addition his routes on the Grandes Jorasses and the E. face of the Grépon are admirably described.

We are glad to see Sir Seymour King's ascent of the Silberhorn included. This is a climb little known to the younger generation. Criticism of the 1899 Dent Blanche accident is unprofitable. This was a pure accident, and no one, necessarily ignorant of the facts, should have ventured to criticise the guides.

As one reads one finds oneself wishing that Mr. Benson had not subordinated his natural style or mutilated so many fine passages of others. This latter—an essential failing, perhaps—is distinctly irritating at times. Also, the reader should be allowed to make his own occasional criticisms without being told what to think.

The last chapter—Everest—is the best in the book. It describes concisely and restrainedly the epic 'venture' of mountaineering history.

If we ourselves have dared to criticise, it is because Mr. Benson has written a book well worthy of criticism. The task was a difficult one, but he has succeeded admirably. By his own confession the book was written for the 'man of the level pavement.' It is, however, well worthy of a place on the mountaineer's bookshelf as being a representative selection of some of the finest climbs ever accomplished. The pity of it is that the finest climbs are not always those most written about. There are a number of interesting illustrations which are as good as can be expected for such a moderately priced book.

Mountaineering. By Kaoru Tanaka. Pp. 278. Illustrated. Tokyo : S. Meguro & Co., 1927. \$2.30 (4s. 3d.).

WHEN the Japanese Alpine Club, which has lately attained its majority, was first founded the hope was expressed that amongst its chief activities would be the 'contribution of a worthy Somewhat to Alpine Literature.' This aspiration has been most creditably fulfilled, though it is a matter for real regret that since nearly all the writings of Japanese mountaineers are in their own very difficult language the outside world is almost entirely debarred from the pleasure and interest that are to be found in their pages. At the same time it seems fitting that, as opportunity offers, attention should be drawn to such publications as may serve to give an idea of the kind of work that is being done by our Japanese colleagues, whose aptitude with the pen is a worthy complement to their skill with ice axe or with ski.

The little volume before us is entitled 'Mountaineering,' and is by Mr. Kaoru Tanaka, F.R.G.S., Lecturer in Geography at the Kobe University of Commerce, and forms one of a series on 'Sport.'

Among other features, it affords an interesting example of a characteristically Japanese attitude towards mountains and mountaineering in its widest sense, in the case of the more thoughtful climbers to-day.

Its four chapters are each divided into sections of a most comprehensive variety, of which the following are representative :

The right attitude of approach to mountains.

Mountains as the highest form of natural beauty, and mountaineering as the noblest form of sport.

A brief history of mountaineering.

Special features of the Japanese Alps, and of Alpine phenomena, winter and summer.

The technique of rock-climbing, with special reference to Mr. Yuko Maki's and other writings on the subject.

Winter mountaineering and ski-tours, with special hints for ladies.

One of the most characteristic aims of the book is to emphasize the desirability for Japanese mountaineers, while enjoying to the full the physical pleasures of their pursuit, of maintaining *mutatis mutandis* the agelong attitude of their forefathers towards the mountains themselves. For to these the 'everlasting hills' always served as the symbols of calm and peace, and as the abodes of august spiritual forces with which enlightening communion was possible for the serious mind and the inquiring spirit. Until European climbers, some thirty years ago, began to explore and draw attention to the wilder and sterner mountain forms in the regions now known as the Japanese Alps, it was the gentler and more gracious outlines of the symmetrical volcanic cones, such as Fuji-san and her several hundred satellites of varying dimensions, that made the most moving appeal, and those aspects of nature were most admired which suggested an atmosphere of untroubled repose. Here the author quotes the ancient Chinese aphorism : 'It is the benevolent man who admires the unchanging mountains, but the wise one who admires moving waters.'

His conclusion of the whole matter is this : The *pium desideratum* at which to aim is a *combination* of the views of the East and West.

Mount Olympus. By Francis P. Farquhar and Aristides E. Phoutrides
Pp. x + 48. Illustrated and maps. San Francisco: Johnck & Seeger. 1929. \$7½.

THIS is the first separate volume in the English language devoted to the most famous mountain of classical antiquity, and it is not unworthy of its subject. The book is beautifully printed from Granjon type on French hand-made paper. The illustrations include a photogravure frontispiece of the high summits, and four half-tones from photographs by Mr. Farquhar, one of which, 'South-Eastern Ridge of Mount Olympus from Skala,' has not previously been published. There are two maps : a reproduction of a quaint Ortelius engraving of 1590, and an outline map of modern Greece.

It will be remembered that Messrs. Farquhar and Phoutrides ascended Skolion in 1914, and published an account of their expedition in *Scribner's Magazine* for November 1915, under the title 'With the Gods on Mount Olympus.' As this article has for long been out of print, it is satisfactory to find it reprinted (with the omission of a topographical note now rendered obsolete) in this volume. In addition we have now a useful section, entitled 'Historical Notes,' in which the climbing history of the mountain is dealt with in outline from the earliest times up to the present. In comparatively small compass Mr. Farquhar has succeeded in conveying to the reader all the essential facts.

It had been the intention of the two authors to produce a much larger volume on the mountain: a plan that was not completed owing to the death of Phoutrides some years ago. In the preface Mr. Farquhar pays high tribute to the qualities of his friend, who died at the early age of thirty-six. The volume includes a short poem by Phoutrides on 'Olympus.'

Mr. Farquhar has included an excellent bibliography, by far the best and most complete in existence, which would suffice by itself to make the book indispensable for future students of the mountain. Indeed, to sum up one's impressions, one might say that this is a book which it is a joy to possess; and which does for Mount Olympus very much what 'Auldjo' did for Mont Blanc almost exactly a century ago.

W. T. E.

'Mont Blanc again'¹: Two new books.

Without going as far as the late Edward Whymper, we are not among those who consider this massif as 'the finest group of mountains in Europe.' To our mind the savage grandeur of Dauphiné is without rival. Be that as it may, Mont Blanc is unrivalled as regards present-day literature.

I. *La Chaîne du Mont Blanc* is worth a place in all libraries. The photographs are among the very best we have seen, the aquarelles are effective, and the text, written by the principal modern authorities on the Chain, is bound to be concisely sufficient.

Since Kurz and Vallot give us the information required—to quote only the most recent authorities—we turn naturally to the illustrations. Comparisons are odious, but we may be permitted to admire beyond all the photographs by the Bottega d'Arte, Courmayeur. Of these, the views of the 'Aiguille Noire de Pétérét'

¹ I. *La Chaîne du Mont Blanc*, by Henri Bregeault, E. de Gigord, J. and T. de Lépiney, A. Migot, R. Richard and H. de Ségogne, with an Introduction by J. P. Farrar, pp. 162, profusely illustrated. Paris: Alpina, 1928. Price 150–225 fr.

II. *Les Panoramas du Mont Blanc*, by Robert Perret, pp. xxii + 210, illustrated. Chambéry: Dardel, 1929. Price 100 fr.

(p. 7) and 'Les Grandes Jorasses vues d'Entrèves' (p. 31) are simply magnificent both in effect and reproduction. There are others which are, or *should* be, as fine. But 'Dent du Géant' (p. 123) and 'Mont Blanc from Aiguille de Trélatête' (p. 143) have been printed 'reversed'—a sad oversight.

Other splendid views are 'Au Sommet du Tour Noir' (Chalonge, p. 53), spoilt by an attempt at sensationalism, 'Panorama de l'Aiguille de Leschaux' (Ravelli, p. 75), 'Aiguilles de Blaitière et du Fou' (Chevalier, p. 103), 'Dent du Géant' (Boissonnas, p. 125).

The vast majority of the views are by M. Bregeault, and, as might be expected from such an expert photographer and mountaineer, are of great beauty and interest: we like best 'Montée au Col du Dôme' (p. 6), 'Le Dru' (p. 13), 'Aiguille de Triolet' (p. 67), 'Grandes Jorasses' (p. 115), and last but not least, although of necessity foreshortened, 'Aiguille de Bionnassay, face nord' (p. 159).

One word of criticism: we should have preferred, in such a work, *unusual* views. Instead of which the majority are well known almost to the point of banality. Still M. Bregeault's 'Sommet de l'Aiguille de Bionnassay' (p. 158) is very much out of the ordinary!

The 'get-up' of the book is splendid, the price so moderate that we recommend it strongly to all mountaineers and lovers of the picturesque.

II. This is another very fine work. The plan adopted differs from that in I. On each page is an illustration of some peak and the title includes a short *résumé* of the route followed in its ascent, so far as the said route corresponds with the illustration. The itineraries are after Kurz, 1927. Where necessary, the 'route' is continued over the page.

Several good judges have considered the illustrations as superior, on the whole, to those in I., *La Chaîne du Mont Blanc*. We are far from holding this opinion, but it is, unquestionably, a case of splitting hairs. In one respect M. Perret's book is superior: the illustrations² are better chosen, are far more 'unusual,' and give a larger selection of views other than of the French slope. There are no less than 208 mountain illustrations besides two interesting studies of guides—pursuing their unlawful occupations—at the end. Photographs we especially admire will be found: 118 'Aiguille du Géant,' 153 'Crocodile, Caïman, Blaitière, Grands Charmoz, Grépon,'³ 203 'Aiguille Noire de Pététet,' 206 'Pointe Walker of Grandes Jorasses,' 'Aiguille Javelle,' 'Aiguilles Dorées,' etc., etc.

² Nearly all of which appear to be of M. Perret's own taking.

³ The author's reasons for spelling the name Greppon throughout are as unconvincing as are his claims for adopting the form 'l'Hognan' *vice* Lognan. After all, 'Chammonis' is the earliest version!

The general arrangement and production of the book is superb, and as regards both *La Chaîne du Mont Blanc* and *Les Panoramas du Mont Blanc*, we would say to all mountaineers, 'Go to the book-shop.'

In one respect, however, both books are deficient: the indexes are miserably inadequate. Italian critics may with truth complain that the southern slopes are badly neglected. For this neglect the insanities of their own Government and frontier guards are mainly responsible.

May we trust that both works are only precursors to others similar on the French Alps? The publishers of II. will find better material nearer home.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY.

The following works have been added to the Library:—

Club Publications.

- Akademischer Alpenclub Bern.** 23. Jahresbericht, 1927-8. 9 × 6: pp. 30: ill.
- (1) **Appalachian Mountain Club.** Appalachia. 1928
- (2) ——— Bulletin, vol. 21. 7½ × 5: pp. 218. 1927-8
- (3) **C.A. Belge.** Bulletin. 1928
- (4) **C.A.F.** La Montagne. Revue mensuelle. Vol. 24. 9 × 6: pp. xxxi, 400: ill. 1928
- (5) ——— **Groupe de Haute Montagne.** Annuaire, No. 3. 8½ × 5½: pp. 110: plates. 1928
- **Isère.** Circulaire trimestrielle. 8½ × 5½. 1929
- (6) ——— **Lyons.** Revue Alpine. Vol. 29. 9½ × 6: pp. vii, 174: ill. 1928
- **Pyrénées Centrales.** Annuaire du cinquantenaire de la Section 1876-1926. 10½ × 7½: pp. xvi, 184: ill. Toulouse, 1927
- 100 copies printed, of which this is 64.
- Contains:—*Charles Fabre*, Cinquante ans de Pyrénéisme: Autour du Pic du Midi d'Ossau et du Balaïtous: Onze journées en Ariège et Andorre.
- The second item in the above is printed also separately. 10½ × 7½: pp. 144: ill. Toulouse, 1928
- (7) **C.A.I.** Bollettino. 1928
- (8) ——— Rivista mensile. Vol. 47. 9½ × 6¾: pp. xv, 429: ill. 1928
- **Bergamo.** U. Tavecchi, Diario dell'alpinista. Guida rapida alle Capanne e rifugi alpini. . . . Anno vii. 5½ × 3¼: pp. 188: maps. 1929
- (9) ——— **Milano.** 1928
- Gruppo 'Antonio Sciesa,' difondere fra le masse la conoscenza del C.A.I. 1928
- (10) ——— **Trieste.**
- (11) ——— **Verona.** Bollettino sezionale. 9½ × 6¾. 1928
- (15) **Cairngorm Club.** Journal. 1928
- (12) **Canadian Alpine Journal.** Vol. 16. 9 × 6: pp. (viii), 260: plates. 1926 and 1927
- (16) **Climbers' Club.** Journal.
- (13) **Club suisse des femmes alpinistes.** Nos montagnes. 10 × 7¼: pp. 207: ill. 1928
- (14) **Colorado Mountain Club.** Trail and Timberline. Monthly. Nos. 100-122. 9 × 6: pp. 10 each number: ill. 1927-8