

REVIEWS

Snow on the Equator. By H. W. Tilman. pp. 265; illustrated, maps. London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1937. Price 12s. 6d.

TILMAN'S career will interest all mountaineers, and in his *Snow on the Equator* we are told nothing but learn much of the nature of a born explorer. Characteristically the story begins at the end of the war. For most of us who are old enough to have been in the war it was the Great Adventure. Yet a chronicle of one's war experiences does not now make very interesting reading. The discomforts of the trenches, the shell which exploded on the spot where one had been standing a minute previously, are experiences common to so many. Tilman sets out to tell uncommon experiences which he enjoyed himself and which he rightly supposes will interest us.

There is an amazing variety of experiences in the book: bridge building, plantation work, elephant hunting and gold mining, as well as exploring. The traverse of Mount Kenya was an outstanding mountaineering feat. The author's bad reaction to height on Kilimanjaro, his failure to reach the absolute summit, his subsequent ascent without a companion, show a superb hardiness. The spirit however is less that of grim determination than that of the Three Jovial Huntsmen. His personal encounters are friendly, things seen are interesting, and mishaps stimulating. If a selection were to be made from the personal encounters, the reviewer would choose the Masterful Missionary on p. 252 and the Stranded Motorist on p. 224. The hunting incident on p. 82, concerning two rhinos and one elephant, is a gem of its kind; and the story of the taking of a foetal elephant works up to a perfect conclusion.

The outstanding episode of the book is the crossing of Africa from Kampala to the West Coast on a push-bike, living on the country. The crossing however was not made in the spirit of a man who makes the first flight across the Channel before breakfast in a blue suit on a Friday. The journey started from the terminus of the Uganda railway because the line ended there, and was continued on a bicycle because this was a cheap method of transport. The author carries the reader with him. One feels that one is on a bicycle with the rider, and the country, with all its life and colour, streams past on either side. The reviewer had a feeling of sadness when the end of the journey was reached and would have liked to embark with the author at Dulana.

Many readers will be able to appreciate the true portrayal of the atmosphere of the Congo Forest, but few know the amazing Moon mountains of Central Africa, where it rains for about three hundred and fifty days in the year and thick mist is almost continuous. Here Shipton and Tilman climbed with fewer porters than any other expedition to these mountains. Characteristically instead of waiting

for a rift in the mist they found their way to the summit of the highest peak with a visibility of 10 feet ; and then waited for the mist to clear in order that they might verify that they had reached their objective. Perhaps however even more striking is Tilman's descriptive power. The scenery of the Moon mountains is unique and incomparable, but from a short trip the author has carried back with him a vivid memory which enables him to give an accurate and vivid picture of the massif.

The author's reference however to his companions as B. or S. or D. makes the narrative sound a little less real than it might, and is unnecessary as Tilman has nothing but pleasant things to say about them. Inevitably in a book of this kind mistakes can be found if one looks for them. The inflorescence of the mwalika, or shrubby helichrysum, is straw-coloured and white ; it is the herbaceous helichrysum which is pink. It was not, of course, in fact Cortez who stood 'silent upon a peak in Darien.' It was not during a circumnavigation of Lake Victoria that Stanley was camped on the foot-hills of Ruwenzori and first heard of the snows above him. The title of the native king of Toro is Mukama, not Kabaka. Aristotle refers to the Mountain, not mountains, of Silver : ἀργυροῦν ὄρος. This is important as indicating that the reference is based on definite knowledge, for a guess would have inferred a range rather than a single massif for the origin of so great a river. Perhaps it would be fair to mention that the official account of the melancholy incident at Jinja, involving a civil officer and Horace, gives the occasion of the accident as a gallant attempt to rescue a dog.

The quotations in the book are apt. Some of the photographs are good, and all interesting. The maps are adequate. The decorations by Bip Pares are particularly attractive ; the representation of omukoni trees, which, with other writers, the author insists on calling giant groundsel, shows accurately the most telling feature in the vegetation of the snow mountains of tropical Africa.

G. N. H.

Son of the Mountains : The Life of an Alpine Guide. By Dr. Julius Kugy, translated by H. E. G. Tyndale. Pp. 200, with 9 illustrations and sketch-map. London : Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1938. Price 7s. 6d.

THOSE who have revelled in Dr. Kugy's *Alpine Pilgrimage* will be once again grateful for the partnership between Dr. Kugy and his translator which has rendered accessible to English readers this delightful and understanding story of a great guide's life. Anton Oitzinger of Valbruna (Wolfsbach) first learnt his cragsmanship and his eye for a mountain as a sheep and goat herd in his native Seissera valley and later as a chamois stalker to the then King of Saxony. After a few years spent as a woodman in various parts of the Alps and Carpathians, and as a sawyer in Bulgaria, where he had some hair-raising experiences with brigands—*Ja, mei Liaber*—he had earned enough to return home, marry, establish a house and farm and add to a modest prosperity by dealing in sheep and cattle or hauling timber. His house was destroyed by fire, his fields were devastated by flood, his sheep perished in a

blizzard, but he won through none the less. In and between he acted as guide, leaving a name which will be permanently associated with Dr. Kugy's in the opening up of the Western Julian Alps. When the war came he all but met the fate of a spy, only escaping by craft and sheer swiftness of decision. Once again his house was destroyed, and after three years he came back from exile and patiently and cheerfully rebuilt his home and his life under another flag.

Such is the simple and typical story which forms the main thread of a book written with all Dr. Kugy's felicity of description and generous love of mountains and his fellow men. It is a rare tribute from one mountaineer to another, from the accomplished scholar and musician to the simple peasant, his friend and guide—and not on the mountain side only.

'A day with him was a healing and invigorating tonic. He taught me how to accept what was within my grasp, to adapt myself to life with gratitude for its gifts, and to set patience and simplicity in place of exalted expectation.'

The actual mountaineering chapters contain some vivid narrative, notably that of the conquest of the north face of Montasch, much beautiful description, and much of Dr. Kugy's happy and wise philosophy of mountaineering and of life. Happiness, indeed, should in his view be 'the foundation stone of all mountaineering.' There is a charming chapter in praise of bivouacs whose doctrine he sums up by saying, 'you can learn most about a mountain by sleeping on it.' With the foolhardy and for the advertiser he has no patience:

'The recklessness of certain ultra-modern feats of cragsmanship can never be to my taste. One should think first of the delight of living, of health and soundness of limb, and keep these free to serve aims greater than sporting successes can ever be; above all, shunning the pose of heroism in the mountains. Cragsmanship is a marvellous thing, but it cannot ever be more than a certain dexterity. To my mind, it should always be the means to an end. There remains something greater. For myself, I shall never forget that far and away the best cragsman of my acquaintance was my ape Benjamin, of blessed memory.'

A pleasant chapter by Dr. von Kaltenegger describes how, long after the war, he once induced the veteran to return to his guiding and take him for a long day out, and how the experience knocked all his guideless conceit out of him. Needless to say the translation is on the same admirable level as that of *Alpine Pilgrimage*.

L. S. A.

Everest: The Unfinished Adventure. By Hugh Ruttledge. 10½" × 7"; pp. 295; 63 plates; 2 maps. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937. Price 25s.

THE successful climbing of Mount Everest involves the solution of so many separate problems and the synchronizing of so many favourable factors, that the chances of any one expedition reaching the summit are small. Yet every party that makes the attempt brings back some contribution towards the final victory that will come one day. The

reconnaissance of 1935 and the adventure of 1936 both taught many lessons, and the great value of Hugh Ruttledge's book is that he stresses those lessons and passes them on to those who come after him. Before leading the expedition in 1933 he spent months in studying the problems involved; in 1936 he had the additional experience that 1933 gave him; and it is possible that had permission from the Tibetan authorities come earlier, so that an assault could have been made in 1935, the strong party that he got together for 1936 might have been successful the year before. As it happened, the favourable factors of permission, good weather, and a strong party, did not come together, and the early monsoon of 1936 never gave the assault the remotest chance of success.

The great merit of this account is, therefore, not so much in the interesting and detailed account of how the party passed their time in impossible circumstances, as in the record of lessons and the clear analysis of problems still to be faced. Questions regarding the size of the party, the best season of the year for an assault—bearing in mind 'average' weather conditions, the arrival of the monsoon, the condition of snow at high altitudes and the force of the wind—the rate of acclimatization and the effect of deterioration on physical and mental powers, siege or rush tactics, as well as the problems of equipment, diet, and climbing technique, are so bound up with each other, that the best answer to five of them may be modified by the solution of others. Everest is a problem by itself; experience gained on other mountains is valuable for the elements of this problem, but deduction from that experience cannot be applied direct.

A leader who is not encountering the severe physical strain, the deterioration from lack of oxygen, and excessive wastage, should be mentally capable of passing a sound judgment on these matters, and of exercising a salutary check on those who do not visualize the problem as a whole. Mr. Ruttledge expresses his views clearly. He is not in favour of a very small party; he emphasizes the need for reserves in case of sickness, preferring two doctors to one. He is not in favour of his party being worried and exhausted with the cares of travel and diplomacy by the time they reach their base camp; he would add a non-climbing transport officer to relieve the climbers of this burden. He holds that with proper acclimatization a stage is reached where appetites are capricious, and with a number of individuals, some of whom cannot assimilate native foods, some tinned provisions are essential. Here he seems to advocate the middle way between the extremists favouring a native diet and those who crave for the flesh-pots. These and many other details are considered; and it must be emphasized that it was not the organization of the party or any fault in the plan of operations that prevented an assault from being made in 1936. The monsoon bears the sole responsibility.

There are some useful appendixes. That dealing with the weather shows how difficult it is to forecast the monsoon in the Himalaya without reciprocal observations in the mountains. It is important for

the leader to know as early as possible how much time he has in which to make his assaults before the monsoon. But for the meteorologist in Calcutta to carry out the necessary research for his forecasts, he must have co-operation from travellers in the mountains. It is only with such co-operation that accurate forecasts in the future will be possible; and from those made in 1936 it is obvious that more observations are required. Every expedition has a duty to its successor in this respect.

The same obligation may be said to apply to questions of health and the use of oxygen, both of which are dealt with in the appendixes. It is possible to take the line that if small parties go out often enough the year may come when they may be lucky. There is no reason to believe, however, that Tibet will permit these expeditions to continue indefinitely, and there is a very great deal to be said for the view that a strong climbing party, supported by scientifically equipped reserves, working to a scientific plan, is more likely to be successful in any one year, than a party, however homogeneous and compact, which may find all the conditions favourable, and yet fail through the sickness or exhaustion of one man. The slogan, 'No damned science,' is all right for hikers and holiday-makers, but not for an undertaking of this difficulty and magnitude.

K. M.

Naar de eeuwige Sneeuw van tropisch Nederland. By Dr. A. H. Colijn. Pp. 286, illustrations and map. Amsterdam, Scheltens and Giltay, 1937.

THIS is the story of the first ascent of Mt. Carstensz, 16,300 ft., probably the highest mountain of the great New Guinea island, the western part of which is under Dutch government. This summit is called after the Dutch navigator who, in 1623, sighted it from the deck of his ship. Exploration of these snowy regions began in 1907. In 1909, 1911 and 1921 Dutch expeditions reached the snow-covered summit of Wilhelmina mountain, 15,500 ft. In 1910 Goodfellow and Wollaston¹ set out for Carstensz but failed; two years later Wollaston reached the foot of the hanging glacier of the Carstensz pyramid, but was there turned back. All these expeditions lasted six months or more, and were accompanied by dozens of coolies and native soldiers.

Dr. Colijn was able to simplify matters greatly by the assistance of an aeroplane belonging to a petroleum exploration company, of which he was local manager. From air-photographs and from an occasional flight over the mountain, Dr. Colijn concluded, with his mountaineering experience, that an ascent might be possible. There were no landing-grounds, but food and equipment could be dropped at two spots, one of which was an alpine meadow at 12,000 ft., thus enabling the climbing party to move quickly and in small numbers. Only two dry months of the year, November and December, were available for the journey out and back; and even during these months mist and rain

¹ *A.J.* 27. 236, 328; 28. 296-304.

begin daily from 10 A.M., continuing till nightfall. In the other ten months it seems to rain practically without intermission.

The party consisted of three Europeans, all with Alpine experience, and eight Dyaks, native mountaineers from Borneo, strong and reliable men. The total weight carried was only 275 kilograms, the white men carrying their own sacks, and food for only seven days was taken.

The details of the expedition are given fully in *A. J.* 49. 177-189. The distance from the coast to the summit, as the crow flies, is not more than sixty miles, but thick tropical forest, with the soil covered by a mass of roots two to three feet high, made progress slow, and it took nearly four weeks before the party was clear of the forest and could attack the mountain itself from the alpine meadow, where they were elated to discover all the parachutes with their supplies in perfect condition.

From air-photographs they knew already that Carstensz is not a single mountain but a massif with different glacier systems and with no outstanding summit. But the study of these photos had misled them with regard to the accessibility and condition of the glaciers, and the difficulties proved much greater than they had anticipated. It was only after a week of exploration, and twice shifting their camp to a higher point, that they were able to gain the highest summit, concluding their scientific operations in clear but threatening weather. Their next expedition was to the Carstensz pyramid, a rock-climb. For a whole week they attempted the E. ridge, the W. ridge and the N. face in turn, but each time heavy snowfall drove them back when within 300 ft. of the summit. The illustrations show the climb to be attractive but far from easy, and future parties are advised to try the E. ridge combined with the N. face; and as the rocks demand much time, camp should be pitched if possible on the Carstensz Glacier.

To sum up, this is an excellent story of an expedition to unknown mountains, whose summits are not extraordinarily difficult, but whose base is difficult to reach. Success was due to the wonderful organization by Dr. Colijn and his companions, which deserves the more credit in that plans were not developed in Europe or in a big city like Batavia, but in a small, remote tropical settlement. The great narrative powers of the leader give this book a prominent place among those of mountain exploration in virgin countries. It is enriched by a good map, many beautiful photographs, and separate chapters on ethnology, geology and botany, together with a vocabulary of the native dialects, thus enabling the reader to get as complete a picture as is now possible of the country and its inhabitants.

I. D. B.

Auf Kundfahrt im Himalaja. By Paul Bauer. Pp. 170 + 94 illustrations and 5 sketch maps. Munich: Knorr and Hirth, 1937.

DEDICATED to the victims of 1937, European and native, this splendid tribute comprises a narrative of the 1936 expedition, including the conquest of Siniolchu and one of the Simvu peaks, with a full account of the 1937 Nanga Parbat disaster.

There is little in these moving pages that will be new to readers of the ALPINE JOURNAL. The author may be trusted to give a calm and dispassionate narrative of events which will remain memorable in the history of the Himalaya. The print is an enlarged and more legible Gothic, but there is unfortunately no index. The illustrations are magnificent²; notable among these are air photographs (plates 90 and 91), taken during the flight from Lahore to Gilgit. The search-party's warm reception by the R.A.F. and the kindness of all ranks of the British Army were no more than one expects; nevertheless it is pleasant to read how appreciative were the German mountaineers.

As regards the disaster itself, there is little that is fresh except for some remarkable stories by the Balti porters serving at the base. So fantastic were these—naked fairies flitting over the submerged Camp 4—that Bauer had to request the *Fabulierer*-in-chief, one Jussup Khan, to hold his peace. On learning the leader's wishes, the Balti at once consented to remain silent for the future!

The search for the victims, although the weather was mostly perfect—or, as Bauer states, ideal for the ascent—must have been an extremely dangerous, as well as exhausting, labour. Moreover, the Germans proceeded with the utmost speed, carrying enormous loads, to the site of Camp 4. There was no acclimatization possible; all ranks worked like men possessed, digging gigantic trenches and galleries under the fallen séracs. The sounding-rods were constructed in the R.A.F. shops at Lahore; naval ropes were procured in Calcutta; so excellent did these latter prove that Bauer proposes to use no others for future parties in the Himalaya. The leader himself, as well as others of the search-party, went down with malaria or dysentery, but Bauer characteristically fought his way up again to Camp 4. Food ran short; in fact, the toil undergone at over 20,000 ft. by an untrained party must have been as severe as man may undertake and live. Ironically enough, the site first chosen by Wien's party,³ and rightly discarded as dangerous in favour of the place submerged by the great avalanche, remained quite immune from such. As related by the press in July, two only of the Germans could not be reached, the others were all interred in a common grave nearby. The Sherpas, at the request of Nursang, the surviving *sardar*, were left where they died. Again, it is pleasant to read of the help given by Smart, Cropper, Mackenzie, Hadow and others, together with their men, who made forced marches from Chilas, Srinagar and Gilgit in the hope of finding survivors still alive. As Bauer remarks (p. 154), '... the same race and blood relationship ...'

Is there another and safer route possible to Nanga Parbat? The author does not say. Certainly, the way to the long N.E. ridge must always be dangerous (plates 81, 83). But when the fall of the terrible peak is decreed, all will hope that Bechtold, von Kraus and Luft will, under Bauer's leadership, be first on the summit of that great Valhalla.

E. L. S.

² Note especially plates 11, 12, 34-35, 43, 54-55.

³ *A.J.* 49. 220.

Fünf Jahrhunderte Triglav. By Dr. Julius Kugy. Pp. xi + 378, with 48 illustrations. Leykam-Verlag, Graz, 1938. Price S. 17, RM. 8.50.

No man could be better qualified than our Honorary Member Dr. Kugy to write the history of the Triglav. Standing on the frontiers of two nations, close to the point where three languages meet, it is now one of the most frequented of all summits in the Eastern Alps. From the days of his own first ascent in 1875, Dr. Kugy's thoughts have never been far from this peak. Times have changed since he first broke the spell of inaccessibility which kept the bold Trenta cragsmen from its western approach; the upper slopes are now dotted with spacious Club huts where formerly there was nothing but the meagre Maria Theresia refuge, and all nations flow to this 'sacred mountain of the Slovene people.' It is fitting, therefore, that this history should be set forth by one who, as he justly claims, stands apart from all nationalistic spirit, whose horizon is not bounded by the frontiers of his own native language.

In composing this book, Dr. Kugy has called in the assistance, not merely of such great living authorities as Prof. Gstirner and Dr. Paul Kaltenegger, but of many other authors both past and present; consequently, one finds here in orderly succession the records of a peak which, emerging slowly from the mists of antiquity, was first trodden by man in 1778, the full secrets of whose slopes have only been revealed in post-war years. There is indeed a contrast between the early accounts of Willonitzer and Hacquet, and the stimulating narratives of latter-day *Kletterfritzen* on the great N. crags, between the scholarly wanderings of Gilbert and Churchill, and the search within the gaunt walls of the *Schwarzer Graben* for traces of one of the mountain's victims. One may ponder upon the author's regret that modern climbs often end, not at the summit, but on the *Kugyband*,⁴ and among the flesh-pots of the Kredarica hut; as he himself admits, he comes from an age when routes were 'opened' rather than 'conquered,' but all who have been privileged to visit him in Valbruna will know the ready welcome extended to those of the modern school who share his affection for the Julian Alps.

To Dr. Kugy, the mountains are far more than a mere holiday setting; the native dwellers, the legends which haunt their surroundings, are an essential part of his understanding and love for the Triglav. He has been a kind of Prospero for this region, with Andreas Komac as his attendant Ariel, weaving in spirit a magical web over hill and dale. Among his early friends was Rudolf Baumbach, poet and interpreter of the Zlatorog legend. This story of the white *Gamsbock* of Triglav, with that of the hidden treasury of the Bogatin, is examined in a separate chapter by Pfarrer Joseph Abram. Will these legends, asks Dr. Kugy, fade into silence and find their last refuge in books? 'They

⁴ This terrace runs along the upper edge of the N. wall. It was the traditional route taken by Trenta poachers on their incursions into Carniola. . . . 'Now at last I know why it is called after my name: I was the first man to cross this airy passage—without a chamois on my back.'

are like some secret music passing softly over the grey walls of Triglav and across the twilit slopes at evening, now hushed, now breaking forth again in gentle melody, with magical, long-drawn harmony, or echoing as with deep, mysterious bell-notes in these dark ravines.' His own writings, widely read in foreign lands, have given new life to this legendary spirit, which finds utterance even in the detailed accounts of great rock-climbs on the N. face.

Readers of *Die Julischen Alpen im Bilde* will recall the superb collection of photographs in that volume, and may fear that little fresh material of such high quality can be at hand for this book. Such fears are vain, for Dr. Kugy has gathered together a series of magnificent pictures (not all equally well produced), among which special mention is due to those of Dr. Peter Michaelis, who has fully captured the elusive atmosphere of the Zadnjica, that most secluded and beautiful of all gateways to Triglav.

In the days of his youth, Dr. Kugy's strength was proverbial. He has now come almost to fourscore years; but so far from being labour and sorrow, his strength has given us another Alpine classic of its kind. Generous in acknowledging the help of others, he has himself borne far the greater burden in this comprehensive work, where, bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old, he links the present with the past, in honour and gratitude towards a mountain which has brought to him so rich a reward of inward happiness.

Kampf um die Sextner Rotwand. By Oswald Ebner. Pp. 208, with numerous illustrations. Verlag J. N. Teutsch, Bregenz, 1937. Price S. 9.

Die Kämpfe in den Felsen der Tofana. By Dr. Guido Burtscher. Pp. 252, with 117 illustrations. Second edition. Verlag J. N. Teutsch, Bregenz, 1935. Price S. 9.

Der Krieg an Kärntens Grenze 1915-1917. By Hans Lukas. Pp. 125, with 113 illustrations and 8 panoramas. Leykam Verlag, Graz, 1938. Price S. 12, RM. 6.

Der Krieg in der Wischberggruppe. Narratives of former combatants, edited by Norbert Nau. Pp. 100, with 73 illustrations and 2 panoramas. Leykam Verlag, Graz, 1937. Price S. 11.

BRITISH mountaineers may be inclined, not without reason, to look with some distrust on the many works on mountain warfare which have lately appeared on the Continent. They are accustomed to regard the Alps as a playground, and the connection between mountaineer and soldier cannot be as natural to them as to those who in defending their mountains have defended their homeland also. Further, a literary presentation of Alpine warfare may seem foreign to that spirit of reconciliation and the bridging of gulfs which all will welcome as an ideal of mountaineering. Former enmities may easily be revived when old soldiers recall heroic memories, and when, as here, the subject is the Austro-Italian front, there may be danger, even after the lapse of twenty-five years, of rekindling spent passions and thus distorting the narrative.

It is pleasant to record that these four books give no justification for such fears. The course of war in the mountains is set forth accurately

in all its starkness, and yet there is throughout a generous note of humanity towards the enemy, as one who is ready likewise to meet the call of duty and the buffetings of fate.

To take first *Kampf um die Sextner Rotwand*, the author has himself taken an active part in the whole struggle for this mountain, and with all personal modesty he gives us a dramatic picture of events in the Sexten Dolomites, especially of the fighting for the Rotwand and its neighbour the Elfer. Herr Ebner's excellent, picturesque style is well enhanced by numerous illustrations, which, if not always comparable for artistic merit with modern reproductions, yet give so clear a portrait of the topography and of the shifting scenes of war that even a stranger to the district may grasp the sequence of events. Our sympathy and admiration for the combatants is increased by the generous recognition here accorded to the enemy.⁵ A welcome addition to the book is the war diary, composed and edited by Herr Otto Langl, President of the Ö.A.K., of the famous Sepp Innerkofler, who fell during a raid on the Paternkofel soon after the outbreak of hostilities.⁶ There are perhaps now not many British mountaineers who have personal recollections of this prince among Dolomite guides, to whose memory a warm tribute was paid in the pages of this JOURNAL.⁷

Dr. Burtscher's *Die Kämpfe in den Felsen der Tofana* has all the merits of Herr Ebner's book, with its clear description of bitter fighting and the same fair judgment of the enemy. From the literary point of view it has not an equal power of poetical writing, but from beginning to end the narrative is arresting in its portrayal of hardships which exceed human imagination.

In contrast with these two books, which deal in systematic detail with strictly limited sections of the front, Herr Lukas' *Der Krieg an Kärntens Grenze* is concerned mainly through illustrations, supported by a brief explanatory text, with the 100-km. front from the boundary of Tyrol to the Predil Pass. One cannot lay down this book without reflecting on the moving simplicity of the verses inscribed upon a soldier's grave on the Carinthian front, with which the book closes.

Herr Norbert Nau takes us to a district whose praises as a haunt of peace have been sung by a great mountaineer. The war laid a rude hand even upon the romantic valleys of the Western Julians. Conditions were not less severe there than in the Dolomites, nor were the defenders of their homeland less heroic than those who held Rotwand and Tofana. And yet it seems that not even the bitterest struggle could obscure the sunshine of these mountains. The author was too young to serve in the war, and the tale is told for the most part by his friends

⁵ The writer trusts that, without injustice to others not known, he may here refer to one who figures in this book as soldier, mountaineer, and gentleman: Dr. Hannes Sild, whose death last year is lamented by many mountaineering friends and war comrades. See Ö.A.Z., January 1938; also A.ŷ. 49. 286-7. His widow has lately been elected an Honorary Member of the Ö.A.K.

⁶ A.ŷ. 37. 388-90. Portrait, A.ŷ. 35, opp. p. 262.

⁷ A.ŷ. 30. 93, 31. 13.

who once fought in this district. Here also there is no single line of development in the narrative, but the independent articles of distinguished contributors give a comprehensive picture of events on this section, of night patrols and winter's distress, of cheerful climbs on off days, and again of daring raids by individuals far behind the enemy's line and of fierce fighting on the Mittagskofel and at Nevèa. The magnificent illustrations, taken mostly by the well-known mountain photographer Karl Zobek, are alone sufficient to commend the book even to the mere mountain-lover.

P. K.

Thron der Götter. By Arnold Heim and August Gansser. Morgarten Verlag, Zürich and Leipzig, 1938. Pp. 270, with 220 photographs, sketches and map. Swiss francs 16.80.

THIS is a fine book deserving close attention. Prof. Arnold Heim, son of our late Honorary Member Albert Heim, has studied geology for more than twenty years in the Alps, in Chinese Tibet and in the mountains of Siam (see his book on Minya Konka). In 1936, with the help of the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft* of Switzerland, the S.A.C. and others, he organized a first Swiss scientific expedition with the object of visiting the Central Himalaya, especially British Kumaon on the frontiers of Nepal and Tibet. Like several of our Himalayan explorers, Heim is an adherent of small exploring parties. His companions were August Gansser, a colleague in geological work and an experienced mountaineer, and Herr Weckert of Zürich. Unfortunately Weckert fell ill from appendicitis at the beginning of their journey, and had to be carried back in haste to Ranikhet. The two remaining Europeans took with them as little impedimenta as possible, with a limited number of native porters, including three Sherpas from Darjeeling.

The principal object of the expedition was not the ascent of difficult high peaks, although in fact the two men climbed several new summits, and Gansser ascended Phung Di (over 6000 m.) on the Nepal-Tibet frontier, and a pyramidal ice peak of 6100 m. north of the Bhagat Kharak Glacier. Their important geological discoveries, to which *Thron der Götter* makes only general reference, will be published fully in English in a special scientific volume. The present book, written in a clear and easy style, does not contain any sensational climbing feats, but is an account by two cultivated travellers of their journey through unfamiliar mountains, with detailed description of native life and customs, of animals and plant life, with some record of birds' songs and other local melodies. It contains a new relief map of the Central Himalaya (1 : 650,000), 220 magnificent photographs and two panoramas. At the end of the book there are chapters summarizing the results of their geological, geographical and botanical studies. In Prof. Heim's opinion, the autumn (post-monsoon) months are the best for Himalayan travel, as witnessed by the ascents of Minya Konka⁸ in October 1931 and of Kabru⁹ in November 1935.

⁸ *A.J.* 45. 290 sqq.

⁹ *A.J.* 48. 182.

This comprehensive book gives entertaining and instructive reading, which will be useful to every Himalayan traveller and student. Few books can compare with it for superb photographs of peaks and glaciers, and of native types.

P. M.

A Climbers' Guide to the Interior Ranges of British Columbia. By J. Monroe Thorington. Published by the American Alpine Club, New York, 1937. Pp. xii + 148. Price \$2.00.

THIS guide is in continuation of *A Climbers' Guide to the Rocky Mountains of Canada*, by the same author and Mr. Howard Palmer.

It is too late now even for a diehard to lament the development of the climbers' guide book in Canada, though the greatest charm of the Canadian Alps to the climber has in the past consisted in working out routes to their comparatively easy summits, for these mountains do not compare as a rule in technical difficulty with most of the other major mountain ranges of the world, even remembering Mts. Alberta and Robson. In the case of most of these peaks, so long as they remained little known it was usually more difficult to find a way through scrub forest and lines of limestone cliffs guarding their bases than to deal with their upper slopes.

Dr. Monroe Thorington has prepared this volume with great care, and there can be no mountaineer who has a greater first-hand knowledge of the interior ranges of British Columbia. The form and size of the volume are excellent, but it would perhaps have been better to have printed the names of the peaks in bolder type, as was done in *The Rocky Mountains Guide*. The map which forms the frontispiece is of no great value. It might perhaps have been more useful to include a few map diagrams such as are found in the Gaillard Guides. Not the least valuable part of the guide is formed by the chapter introductions, and also the list of maps.

Dr. Monroe Thorington and the American Alpine Club are to be congratulated on this volume.

C. G. C.

Voyageurs Illustres en Suisse. By Charles Gos. With 25 sketches by Frédéric Traffélet. Pp. viii, 119. Edition du Pavillon Suisse, Paris, 1937. Price, Swiss francs 12.

IN this age the views of the illustrious on any subject, however slight their knowledge of it, have a greater publicity value than those of the well-informed and obscure. The cynic may put this down to the snobbery of his fellow-men and their incapacity to form a sound opinion; but there is more in it than that. Men like to have confirmation of the value of what they cherish from those who have power and influence and have won general admiration from others.

M. Gos has shown us a fine variety of stars of the first and second magnitude shedding the light of their intelligence upon Switzerland and its mountains. All of them find pleasure in its lakes and lower hills. There is not one so perverse as to deny its natural beauties.

That beauty, as M. Motta says in his preface, may be a commonplace, but a commonplace which by its truth has become accepted almost as an axiom. And it is the common possession of this beauty by all parts of Switzerland, and its identification with liberty and true democracy, which has joined in a political unity a people who are divided more sharply than others into Protestant and Catholic groups, and who speak four different languages. It is this political freedom, this liberty for individual thought and action coupled with its beauties, that has made Switzerland the ideal refuge for more than one of the famous writers mentioned, when driven from their own country by tyranny or intolerance.

For many of them beauty ceases above the lower hills; the beauty of what lies beyond is hidden and often denied. But we are glad to find that the bigger men, the men of real imagination whose fame is universal, have a vision of the high Alps that is not different from ours though it is more distant. For them the beauty of the uninhabited, trackless region above the tree-line was a discovery, not as it is for us an accepted commonplace. As M. Gos says: 'L'exagération romantique dont se gausse notre temps n'est pas un défaut. Elle révèle au contraire une sensibilité profonde et nuancée, une admirable sincérité. Mais avant tout est-ce une exagération? N'aurions-nous pas, nous aussi, suivant les mêmes données, réagi exactement comme les romantiques?'

The first two illustrious travellers, the German poets Klopstock and Wieland who go to stay with Bodmer at Zürich, seem to have lifted their eyes little to the hills. 'Lorsqu'on dirigeait la longue-vue vers les Alpes' Klopstock 'la rabattait vers les fenêtres des voisins.' Wieland, according to Salomon Gessner, 'est un homme qui, de toute sa vie, n'a rien vu que son encrion et sa bibliothèque.'

In Goethe we find an altogether different attitude. At his first contact with the high Alps, the fear of them which was the inheritance of preceding centuries, takes possession of him; further knowledge inspires an enthusiasm and an insight that is remarkable in the eighteenth century. The accuracy and sobriety of a passage quoted from an account of a winter ascent of the Furka fully bears out the words of M. Gos: 'Il était de taille à ravir le Mont Blanc à Saussure.'

Madame de Staël, on the other hand, is in no sense, either in physique or mentality, a forerunner of the woman climber of to-day. Stendhal alone makes light of the mountain terrors, the ice and snow and avalanches which Napoleon refers to in his famous *ordre du jour* on the crossing of the Alps, and strikes a more modern note: 'Le St. Bernard, ce n'est que ça?'

Heinrich von Kleist makes a record which may be disputed but will not be beaten in our day. He takes his young housekeeper to church at Thun, climbs the Schreckhorn (!), and is back in time to return with her after the service.

M. Gos has a generous and discerning appreciation of four English *voyageurs*: Wordsworth, who 'va doter la littérature anglaise et en

même temps la littérature alpestre d'un de leurs plus splendides poèmes'; Byron, who owed the inspiration of *Manfred* to the Wengern Alp, where, 'isolé dans un silence fastueux . . . il s'abîme dans la contemplation de la Jungfrau'; Shelley, who wrote at Chamonix, 'son admirable ode au Mont-Blanc'; and Ruskin. It was only fair of M. Gos, after praising the author of *Modern Painters* and 'son ouvrage monumental, aux thèses audacieuses sur l'architecture alpine pages ruisselantes de belles idées, de propositions subtiles,' to remind his readers that 'ce membre malgré lui du plus fameux d'entre les clubs alpins, détestait l'alpinisme.' And let us thank him for the question which follows a mention of Ruskin's lectures at Oxford on Alps and Jura. 'Quelle Université, où, et dans quel pays, s'inspirant de ce bel exemple ruskinien inscrira à son programme ce thème magnifique : Les Alpes, leurs valeurs historiques, spirituelles et intellectuelles ?'

We must all envy the great Alexandre Dumas his capacity for creating excitements in his travels. Alas, we shall never be able to eat at Martigny 'un beefsteak d'ours (un ours qui avait dévoré la moitié du chasseur qui l'avait tué, s'il vous plaît)'; it is possible that a member of the Club might be found who 'mange de la marmotte à Obergestelen et y fait des ronds de jambe devant une séduisante Parisienne'; but not one who also 'sert de témoin dans un duel au pistolet . . . se collète avec un vieux bouc, l'abat et le dévore sur place.' No reference is made to Dumas' famous interview with Jacques Balmat which led to the misleading Paccard-Balmat story current in the last century.

Théophile Gautier is the first French writer to describe the Matterhorn and the first to see something in our sport. His reflections on seeing a party (J. M. Elliott and his guides) returning from the Matterhorn are: 'Le pic a sa fascination comme l'abîme. . . . Quoi que la raison y puisse objecter, cette lutte de l'homme avec la montagne est poétique et noble. Ils (les alpinistes) sont la volonté protestant contre l'obstacle aveugle, et ils plantent sur l'inaccessible le drapeau de l'intelligence humaine.'

Wagner himself tells us what an influence the Alps have upon him: 'Laissez-moi encore créer les œuvres que j'ai conçues dans cette Suisse sereine et merveilleuse en face des montagnes sublimes; ces œuvres sont grandioses et nulle part ailleurs je n'aurais pu les concevoir.'

Nietzsche (whose philosophy will be better understood by reading M. Gos' words than by remembering the twisted interpretation that made it a war gospel for so many Germans in 1914) says, 'La philosophie telle que je l'ai vécue, telle que je l'ai entendue jusqu'à présent, c'est l'existence volontaire au milieu des glaces et des hautes montagnes.'

Tolstoi sees the beauty of the distant peaks, but it is the flowers, the grass and the lake, of which he can feel himself to be a part, that give him a feeling of intense happiness: 'Aussitôt je voulais aimer, je

sentais même en moi l'amour de moi-même ; je regrettais le passé ; j'espérais en l'avenir.'

I have mentioned only some of the *voyageurs illustres*.

The illustrations by Frédéric Traffelet are clever, and in most cases give us a picture that epitomises well the attitude of the writer to the attractions of Switzerland. The book, unlike most books in French, is well bound.

R. L. G. I.

Guide des Alpes Valaisannes. 2nd Edition. By Marcel Kurz. Vol. I., Ferret—Collon. Pp. 496 ; 73 illustrations. Vol. III. (a) Théodule—Monte Moro. Pp. 264 ; 44 illustrations. (b) Strahlhorn—Simplon. Pp. 416 ; 70 illustrations. (These parts are not sold separately.) (Published by the Swiss Alpine Club.)

MONSIEUR MARCEL KURZ is a remarkably industrious man. Mountaineers owe him an inestimable debt of gratitude for the amazing amount of labour which must have been entailed in the production of the latest addition to the *Guide des Alpes Valaisannes*. These consist of a second edition of Vol I. 'Ferret—Collon,' and Vol. III in two parts, viz. (a) 'Théodule—Monte Moro', and (b) 'Strahlhorn—Simplon.'

The 2nd edition of Vol. I is arranged on very much the same lines as the 1st edition as regards the method of numbering all the different routes, which facilitates a comparison of the two editions. The 2nd edition contains a great deal of additional information and a certain amount of revision of the headings. The introductory chapter 'Notice Toponymique' in the 1st edition has been omitted but is replaced by paragraphs on this subject introduced under the names which they concern. Monsieur Kurz explains his reason for this in the preface. This alteration has undoubtedly certain advantages, but on the whole we are sorry that he did not see his way to retain the original chapter. Vol. III, however, contains a most interesting chapter on this subject.

The 2nd edition of Vol. III has been practically reconstructed, showing a considerable variation in the arrangement. Monsieur Kurz has adopted a similar system to that of Vol. I of numbering the various routes, which does not occur in the 1st edition. The value of this is obvious for following the routes marked on the excellent diagrams of the peaks, the number of which has been considerably increased—in Vol. I from 56 to 73, and in Vol. III from 80 to 114. Portions of the 2nd edition have been entirely rewritten, of which amongst others the Riffelhorn is a notable instance. Several interesting passages dealing with the history of many of the climbs which are to be found in the 1st edition have been omitted, which is to be regretted, but no doubt Monsieur Kurz was desirous of limiting the size of the volume.

Monsieur Kurz states that there may be some inevitable slips, but anyone who knows his accuracy will realise that these must be very few in number.

S. S.

Lettres de H. B. de Saussure à sa Femme. Edited by E. Gaillard and H. F. Montagnier. Pp. 127. Imprimeries Réunies, Chambéry, 1937.

SAUSSURE is such a great and attractive figure in Alpine history that whatever he writes has special interest. Ten of these sixty-three letters have been recently published, in whole or in part, in *Ces Monts Affreux* by Claire Eliane Engel and Charles Vallot.

There is not much of general interest that is new in them and their special appeal will be to married climbers. Indeed they offer a perfect model to husbands—and there must still be a few—who leave behind them wives who suffer anxieties when they are in the mountains. Fuller knowledge has made the task far easier than it was for Saussure, except for those who manufacture dangers for themselves. It would certainly be difficult for men engaged in climbing the N. face of the Eiger to write home: 'Sois persuadée que je me soigne avec une prudence infinie comme une chose qui t'appartient et qui t'est chère.'

Saussure's later expeditions to Mont Blanc and the Col du Géant show that he underestimated his passion for mountains when he wrote in 1775: 'de grandes courses sans toi, je n'en fais plus, du moins c'est bien mon dessein à présent.' All married men will approve the small departure from strict truth which is revealed by these different descriptions of the same night spent at Martigny. His letter to his wife reads: 'à force de chercher on trouva un petit coin assez propre où je passai une très bonne nuit'; his journal reads: 'je dormis très mal dans un méchant lit.'

We note with satisfaction that mountains are no respecters of persons, even of persons so great as Lord Palmerston: 'Mylord a le pied écorché.' It is rarely that we find a remark on the performances of an Englishman in the Alps in these early days which is not complimentary, but we certainly have one here, in Saussure's comment on the return to Chamonix by Courmayeur from the Col du Géant: 'C'est un peu plus long, mais sans fatigue et sans aucune espèce de danger; il n'a ni neiges, ni rochers, tout de pierres roulées. M. Hill, le plus maladroit des amateurs de montagnes, a fait cette descente de nuit, est tombé 500 fois et ne s'est pas fait une égratignure.'

The last letter written from the Théodule Pass after the arrival of a letter from Madame Saussure is one of the most intimate, and most wives would consider their anxieties worth enduring for such an answer. Whatever we may think of Saussure as a climber, we must acknowledge that as a husband he approaches 'the limit of what is possible.'

R. L. G. I.