

The following motion was carried but with three dissentients :

8.—That the *ad hoc* Committee be asked to consider in addition to the matters for which the S.A.C.O.M. is being formed the following proposals as an electoral basis :

(a) That every Mountaineering Club (in the broad sense of that term) shall be entitled to nominate one representative for the S.A.C.O.M.

(b) That Clubs having a membership (excluding honorary members) in excess of two hundred shall be entitled to nominate additional representatives according to the table set out below :

| Club Membership.               | Number of additional representatives. |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Over 200 and less than 500 ... | 1                                     |
| Over 500 ... ..                | 2                                     |

(c) The S.A.C.O.M. (initially the *ad hoc* Committee) shall elect by ballot from the representatives, nominated by the Clubs, the Committee (10—15) for the ensuing twelve months.

During the discussion on these motions, it was agreed that any member of the S.A.C.O.M. who was unable to attend a Committee meeting should have the power to appoint a deputy, and that it was desirable that he should do so.

It was suggested and generally agreed that in order to keep the size of the S.A.C.O.M. within limits, it would be desirable for some Clubs to agree on common representation.

Mr. G. L. Bartrum, referring to the fifth motion, pointed out that there was nothing to prevent the Committee carrying out its duties from any part of the country if it was thought desirable, but that for convenience and the maintenance of present contacts with Government Departments it was desirable to retain the same address for communications.

Several speakers, while supporting the proposal that for the moment an Advisory Committee only should be formed, thought that the Committee when formed might be asked to consider the formation of an association of British Climbing Clubs.

## REVIEWS

*Upon that Mountain.* By Eric Shipton. Pp. 222, with 31 full page illustrations and 4 sketch maps. 8×5½, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, 1943. Price 12s. 6d.

In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend  
Upon that mountain ; none beholds them there,  
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun  
Or the star beams dart through them.

FROM these elegant lines of Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' Eric Shipton takes the title of his third book, *Upon that Mountain*. In a sense the title may not be inappropriate, but mere adornment apart one soon has a



feeling of the entire inadequacy of it. Geoffrey Winthrop Young's excellent Foreword declares, with entire justification, Eric Shipton's first work, *Nanda Devi*, to be among the best books of adventure known to him. For my own part I agree; but I am prepared further to opine that *Upon that Mountain* will be acclaimed by many as one of the outstanding records of high mountain adventure perhaps of our generation, whether for the layman or the expert. It constitutes Eric Shipton's remarkable and unusual climbing history.

The author was fortunate from boyhood in his opportunities for satisfying an early urge for adventure which only mountain travel, carried out in the simplest and most economical way, could satisfy. Here one can see from his first Norwegian and Alpine journeys that initial revulsion from the elaborate, expensive, and rather weighty custom of the traditional Victorian mountaineers and travellers, which revulsion has grown into a principal tenet of Shipton's mountain creed. 'Soap was the first of the civilised amenities that I learnt to dispense with,' and spare clothing of every kind soon followed suit.

Perhaps we shall not all wish to accept these particular items of the author's doctrine, but many of us will agree with his plea that in simplicity and lightness of equipment lies an advantage that none can dispute. Shipton and Tilman have reduced economical mountain living to a fine, if unrefined art. There are, however, limits to which this doctrine can be carried in practice, and the Shipton—Tilman upper limit is difficult of appreciation, and indeed is apt to be intolerable, to some quite hardy and otherwise efficient explorers.

From the experiences of his first Alpine seasons on the lesser peaks mostly of the Dauphiné, Eric Shipton early realised the undeniable benefits of wandering over smaller and unfrequented ranges for training in the technique of reconnaissance and approach. 'It would be a mistake, I think, to begin climbing in one of the famous centres like Zermatt or Chamonix.' And again, 'as first impressions are important it is better that this exploratory aspect of the game should predominate at first.' Although his initiation was in the company of a guide, to whom he pays generous tribute, and while admitting the superiority over the amateur of the really great guide in most branches of the craft, he discusses at some length the limitations of the average Alpine guide, particularly when taken out of his own district.

While Whymper's *Great Andes of the Equator*, and not *Scrambles*, had given the original impulse for mountain adventure, it was quite another experience that drove the author to seek freedom and further big adventure abroad. He wished quite naturally to fit his tastes and inclinations to a suitable open air profession, if such could be found, but at the interview with the head of his prospective College he was told that there was no opening in the profession of geology unless he obtained a First and then wished to teach the subject! In this respect Eric Shipton passes some fully justified strictures on the ignorance and unreality of many of our so-called educators and educational advisers, whether at school or the university. Too late he



learnt of 'the enormous opportunities open to a man who had specialised in any one of the natural sciences, but in those days I had never heard of the Geological Survey of India, oil prospecting, marine biological stations, the exploration ship *Discovery II* . . . ' I can assure the author that unfortunately this is no isolated case.

And so Eric Shipton went to East Africa, and on a coffee plantation found he was in full sight of, and but 20 miles distant from Mount Kenya, with opportunities to try his skill on that remarkable range of rocky peaks. Wyn Harris was available in the Colony, and little time was lost in organising a joint attempt on Nelion, the lower of the twin peaks of Mount Kenya. After a stiff rock climb the first ascent of this was duly accomplished; and thence the higher point, Batian, reached. This was the second ascent only, Sir Halford Mackinder having made the first ascent of Batian as long ago as 1899. It was soon after this (1930) that Shipton met Tilman, who was right at the commencement of his somewhat meteoric career (within eight years he was to lead an Everest expedition): 'he had a remarkable ability to put up with—even a liking for—unpleasant conditions!'

Having ascended Kilimanjaro together, Shipton and Tilman tackled the far more serious proposition of the traverse of both peaks of Mount Kenya. Shipton gives a graphic account of this first class pioneer expedition, which he considers one of the most enjoyable climbs he has ever undertaken. 'I know of no mountain in the Alps, with the possible exception of Mont Blanc, that presents such a superb complexity of ridges and faces as the twin peaks of Mount Kenya—a complexity that would delight the heart of any mountaineer. Each feature is clear-cut and definite, none is superfluous to the whole lovely structure . . . each would involve a high standard of mountaineering.'

There follows a sensational account of Midget Peak which nearly ended in disaster. It is difficult to know how the latter was prevented, and how Tilman, after falling and being 'knocked out,' could have successfully climbed a wet *rappel* rope to retrieve the position. But Tilman has a quality of toughness all his own.

It was on Kamet in 1931 that Eric Shipton had his first Himalayan experience, but this expedition is merely referred to in passing. Three chapters are specifically devoted to the four Everest expeditions, 1933, 1935, 1936 and 1938, in which he took part. An amusing incident is related of the reply telegram, 'Good enough Shipton,' which was sent in Shipton's absence by an enthusiastic friend to the Everest Committee's invitation to join the expedition of 1933; fortunately or unfortunately, perhaps, that telegram was intercepted before it could reach the 'Fighting Admiral,' who was then chairman of the Mount Everest Committee.

A good account is given, with but few inaccuracies, of the succession of attempts on Everest. The inaccuracies include (1) 'Norton failed to cross the couloir' (p. 103): it is clear from Norton's own account in *The Fight for Everest*, p. 112, and apart from frequent discussions with the reviewer, that he *had* crossed the couloir before turning back;



it is regrettable that all too many writers have subsequently failed to appreciate this fact ; (2) ' He (Odell) had gone very badly at first ' (p. 104) : this should be corrected to a brief *intermediate* spell only, for ' at first ' he was acclimatised enough to assist in the heavy work of cutting out the route up to the North Col ; (3) pre-monsoon winds are north-westerly, not northerly, on Everest (p. 109) ; (4) in two passages on p. 118 for Camp II read Camp III.

The author bemoans the excessive time (17 hours) which often has to be spent in bed in high altitude camps, and the lack of available jobs for members of a large expedition such as that of 1933. ' It is not enough to say that a man of intelligence should find sufficient interest in his surroundings,' he declares ; but isn't it ? And isn't it precisely in this respect that that man will score whose proper and minimum education will have opened his eyes to take such an intelligent interest in the facts of nature around him as to pursue her secrets ?

Chapter 8 is devoted to the ' evils ' of large expeditions in the Himalaya, and the author's outlook on this subject might be summed up in the words of Dr. G. N. Humphreys, which he quotes : ' three constitutes a large expedition, a party of one may be considered a small expedition.' Eric Shipton has obviously never got over the effects of the ' giant ' Everest expedition of 1933 ; it seems to have got well under his skin. True, that expedition was too expensive and elaborate ; it may have been unnecessarily large, but it was certainly ill-balanced, and contained too few members who could do useful scientific research meanwhile. But one great reason against large expeditions of any kind in a poor country like Tibet is the tendency to upset the local economy, in buying up the frugal supplies or enticing people away from their agricultural work for the purposes of labour as coolies, yak-drivers, etc. Eric Shipton considers that the large Everest expeditions have been responsible for setting a bad example to the equally undesirable French and German Himalayan expeditions of recent years.

In the chapter (9) on small expeditions, the author recounts his decision, not without some doubts, to devote his life to mountain exploration, in which ' lack of money must not be allowed to interfere.' The doubts were connected with the orthodox view of the necessity of following a profession with an assured future. One can admire the author's independent outlook : ' I had always rather deplored the notion that one must sacrifice the active years of one's life to the dignity and comfort of old age.' And what a harvest of accomplishment those active years have so far yielded ! And, moreover, what an inspiration to modern sophisticated youth ! As Geoffrey Young's Foreword declares, Eric Shipton has been contributing to ' the beginning of a new epoch in which such venturing may well be within the reach of all, regardless of the size of a bank balance, and in which such determined courses may even be insisted upon as essential to a training for any form of leadership.'

Encouraged by Longstaff and Ruttledge, his first ' small ' Himalayan venture was with Tilman and only three Sherpas into the Nanda Devi



basin, which as everyone knows turned out to be not only a brilliantly successful bit of pioneering, but also a classic of economical organisation—under £300 of total expenditure including return fares from England. This remarkable feat is described in considerable detail, and not least the exciting exit from the Inner Sanctuary over the Sunderdhunga Col by a steep 6000-ft. wall—a veritable classic of bold enterprise and icemanship. He pays a graceful tribute to the successful British-American expedition to Nanda Devi in 1936, which he regards, probably with undue eulogy, as ‘the finest mountaineering achievement ever performed in the Himalaya,’ and ‘a brilliant example of a light expedition.’ Incidentally, on that expedition five, not ‘six, of the seven Sherpas they had brought proved useless and remained below.’ Moreover, scarcity of porters that year was due not to the Everest expedition alone, but also to the concurrent French and German undertakings in the North-west Himalaya.

A chapter is devoted to the reconnaissance and further attempts on Everest of 1935, 1936 and 1938, in all of which the author took part. In reviewing these attempts and repeated failures Eric Shipton seeks, particularly for the non-climbing public, to put the matter of Everest in its true perspective, and he calls attention to the fact that ‘in spite of all the attempts that have been made during the last sixty years upon the giants of the Himalaya by climbers of many nations, not a single mountain of 26,000 feet has yet been climbed.’ In the case of Everest and future attempts upon it, he considers that permission should be sought from the Tibetan Government covering a period of five consecutive years for a series of small expeditions of four climbers each. One of these parties should then stand a good chance of striking a season with the requisite late monsoon; and, as he wisely says, within the period of the attempts much further scientific research could, and should be usefully accomplished. But rightly, and grandly, he does not regret that Everest has not yielded to the first few attempts, and he comments upon our arrogance in assuming that any fine new technique of ice-claw or rubber slipper, in ‘our age of easy mechanical conquest,’ should give us such a prize. ‘We had forgotten that the mountain still holds the master card, that it will grant success only in its own good time.’

Although with Tilman in command the Everest expedition of 1938 was run on lines of relative austerity (in the opinion of some, excessive austerity, for adequate health and strength during a prolonged sojourn in higher Tibet), Eric Shipton turns with relief from these heavy Everest undertakings to his light and highly mobile campaigns in the great Karakoram range and the Aghil mountains, beyond the Shaksgam river. His original exploration and survey work in the latter region earned him the highest award of the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Patron’s Medal. It is a fine story of enterprise and accomplishment, carried out by means of the technique which the author has made his own. The traversing of Younghusband’s intricate Crevasse Glacier, and the crossing of Conway’s remote and almost



legendary 'Snow Lake' were no mean and indeed thrilling achievements, while one can almost gasp with them at the sight at short range of the stupendous north face of  $K_2$ , where 'a single buttress, straight and slender, rose from the level icy floor of the cirque in one prodigious sweep of twelve thousand feet to the gleaming summit dome,' from which avalanches broke and vanished in misty spray in their two miles fall. Indeed, the author's powers of description are considerable, whether he is amongst these spectacular mountains, or wandering through the beautiful flower-spread valleys of Hunza or more austere Baltistan. It was a tragedy that the war found him again up on Conway's 'Snow Lake,' the news of the cataclysm being unexpectedly received on a small wireless set, when he was embarked upon another exploratory venture with a small party of specialists, who in the event were bound to return. But the war did not call a halt to the author's activities in far off lands, for during two years he was British Consul-General at Kashgar, and now is on consular work in Persia. Who will not wish that he may later return to the work for which he is so eminently endowed and where his heart really resides?

A mention must be made of the illustrations, which are first class photographs of many mountain scenes, with a superb view of Makalu and Chomo Lonzö as frontispiece. The attractive wrapper, drawn by Bip Pares, is a 'paraphrase' of the photograph, facing p. 93, of the author looking out from a peak north-west of Everest.

An unfortunate, if not serious omission is an index, which nowadays is too frequently lacking from books of this character.

N. E. ODELL.

*Early American Ascents in the Alps in the Nineteenth Century.* By J. Monroe Thorington (President of the American Alpine Club). Pp. vii, 83; illustrations and facsimiles.

WHILE this compilation is naturally of greatest interest to American mountaineers, it contains so many curious items and illustrations as to be well worth the attention of British readers. The larger part of it is taken up with ascents of Mont Blanc, and in this the list in Stéphen d'Arve's *Fastes du Mont Blanc* serves as a basis, but Dr. Thorington has taken enormous pains in personal correspondence and in searching University and other catalogues to complete and correct d'Arve's list, 'the English names in which,' as another American (J. Cook, 1878) remarks, 'judged by the way they are mis-spelled, seem to have been set up by an Italian in the French language.' Further sections deal with American climbs in other regions, especially Zermatt.

The achievements of many mountaineers well known on this side of the Atlantic, such as J. K. Stone ('Father Fidelis'), W. A. B. Coolidge, W. J. Williams, of course figure in Dr. Thorington's pages, but there are not a few others with interesting performances to their credit. In 1839 Dr. H. A. Grant, in the course of an attempt to ascend Mont Blanc, measured the motion of the Glacier des Bossons (finding it to be 21 inches in 31 hours), by a perfectly simple but adequate



arrangement of sighted stones. G. Heard, who made the ascent in 1855 at the age of 18 (accompanied by K. A. Chapman, an Eton boy aged 17), repeated the ascent with his brother in 1857. Some of his sketches are reproduced, including an amusingly exaggerated Mur de la Côte, and a drawing of the Matterhorn dated July, 1856. This is at least based on, if not copied from, Ruskin's drawing in *Modern Painters*, vol. IV, which had been published only three months earlier; inscribed on it is Saussure's measurement (1796) of the height of the mountain, expressed nearly correctly in English feet, viz., 14,750 feet as the equivalent of 2309.75 toises (which actually equal 14,770 feet). Heard would seem to have been familiar both with the older and the most recent Alpine classics of his time. There is a photograph of him and his brother (in 1857) with nine guides; all the party are armed with long alpenstocks except one guide who sports an ancient axe reaching nearly to his shoulder.

Another interesting group, dated September 12, 1866, includes Peter Taugwalder, père et fils—the best likenesses we know—with axes of quite modern pattern: they had taken two brothers Wilkinson up Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc in that year. Few of us were probably aware that Sir F. J. Campbell, the well known Principal of the Royal College for the Blind, was an American by birth, was blind from early boyhood, but nevertheless climbed Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn, Eiger and Jungfrau—a remarkable series of exploits. One of the most enterprising of these American climbers must surely be J. T. van Rensselaer (New Coll. Oxon.; A.C. 1886; still living at the age of 82) who in the 1880's, in addition to Jungfrau, Finsteraarhorn, Aiguille du Géant, Aiguille Verte, climbed both the Grand Dru and (third ascent) the Petit Dru,<sup>1</sup> and in 1884 'spent ten weeks in the Caucasus with Sir Frank Cook.' One would like to know more about this. Was he any relation of J. van Rensselaer who (with W. Howard), made the first American ascent of Mont Blanc in 1819?

These are but a few specimens of the interesting facts which Dr. Thorington's enthusiastic industry has enabled him to collect. His book is beautifully produced, and deserves a place in all Alpine libraries

E. H. STEVENS.

*Michel-Gabriel Paccard und der Montblanc.* By Carl Egger. Pp. 102, 12 illustrations. Gaiser & Haldimann, Basel, 1943.

IN this little book the author—already so favourably known to British mountaineers by his books, especially *Die Eroberung des Kaukasus*<sup>2</sup>—provides a very readable account of Dr. Paccard and his pioneer ascent of Mont Blanc, incorporating in a thoroughly workmanlike manner most of the relevant facts which have emerged from the investigations of the last 30–40 years. He might, we think, have made more definite acknowledgment of his indebtedness to his predecessors, especially Dr. Dübi, whose book *Paccard wider Balmat* made known so much of the new material.

<sup>1</sup> A.J. 12. 128.    <sup>2</sup> A.J. 45. 173.



Dr. Egger is an enthusiastic upholder of the merits of Dr. Paccard both as a man and a mountaineer, and even reproaches Saussure for indifference to his just claims and to the malicious misrepresentations of Balmat and Bourrit. The increasing number of the 'Friends of Paccard' will be grateful for this energetic reinforcement.

In appendices to the book, Dr. Egger has collected and translated into German the chief documents bearing on the Paccard—Balmat controversy—a most useful feature. We note that he accepts the meaning 'we rested behind the Aiguille du Tacul' for Paccard's 'nous avons couché derrière l'Aiguille du Midi,' on which so much of the interpretation of his account of the expedition to the Tacul basin depends.<sup>3</sup>

From von Gersdorf's diary he has been able to quote a good many passages—it would be interesting to know how he obtained them—which are not in Dübi, and these include some new points of interest. On August 9, the day after Paccard's ascent, von Gersdorf found that he was asleep in his father's house: it would seem therefore that though he was 29 and had been in practice for some seven or eight years, he was still living with his father. Von Gersdorf mentions among the climbers' equipment Eissporen (? spikes for their boots) and Gamaschen (gaiters), and notes that Paccard's barometer was 'an ordinary one by an Italian' and ungraduated—which explains why he had to mark the levels of the mercury during his ascent by file scratches on the glass tube. On the summit Paccard believed that he saw mountains over and beyond those of Dauphiné, and also thought he saw the sun set, which von Gersdorf says from his own careful observations was not possible. He tells that Paccard was intending to make another journey to Mont Blanc, and then to publish a treatise on the subject, either as a book or contributed to a journal. What a pity that, as we now must believe, he never did!

When von Gersdorf met Bourrit in Geneva on August 12, he notes that the news of Paccard's ascent seemed very unwelcome to him, and that he copied von Gersdorf's sketch of the route 'with a trembling hand.' Bourrit asserted that Paccard was wishing to obtain the large reward he believed had been offered for the ascent. Another malicious misrepresentation!

The illustrations are helpful, especially the 'Swissair' view of the north slopes. It is a pity that the fine portrait of Dr. Paccard in his old age—certainly therefore *not* by Joseph Vernet, who died in 1789—is reproduced in the old (? badly retouched) form which was superseded by the superb version published in *La Montagne* of January, 1933.<sup>4</sup> The illustration purporting to represent Paccard and Balmat on the descent from Mont Blanc is a fake: it would have been better not to use it.<sup>5</sup> The calculation 'according to modern formulæ' (the one quoted makes no allowance for the effect of moisture) of Saussure's barometrical observations on Mont Blanc compared with those at

<sup>3</sup> *A. J.* 49. 9.    <sup>4</sup> And in *A. J.* 46. 9.    <sup>5</sup> *A. J.* 45. 183.



Chamonix is not worth much, since Saussure's records<sup>6</sup> do not provide the data for the modern method of reducing the readings to 0° which is necessary for the purpose. These slight criticisms are offered in the hope that they may be useful for a second edition.

To all who read German we recommend the book as an interesting and up to date account of the subject.

E. H. STEVENS.

*Escape to the Hills.* By W. A. Poucher. Pp. 216, 154 illustrations. Published by Country Life, 1943. Price 25s.

*Scotland through the Lens.* By W. A. Poucher. Pp. 119, 80 illustrations. Chapman & Hall, London, 1943. Price 18s.

These two books are the latest additions to the already numerous photographic records of Mr. Poucher's holidays in the British hills.

*Escape to the Hills* embraces Lakeland, Snowdonia, and a considerable portion of the Scottish Highlands taking the reader as far westwards as Loch Awe. Mr. Poucher states in his introduction that this volume is to be followed by another which will deal with the western sides of the Highlands. Mr. Poucher's wanderings have resulted in a fascinating collection of splendid photographs. Mr. Poucher is evidently a mountaineer of the right type, as climbing for its own sake is not what he seeks, although obviously he must have had to accomplish a considerable amount of strenuous scrambling in the course of his expeditions.

*Escape to the Hills* opens with a charming introductory chapter, while in both volumes each group of photographs is preceded by explanatory notes which, I suggest, would form an excellent guide book if reproduced in a more portable form. In the introductory notes to *Scotland through the Lens*, Mr. Poucher's comparisons of the hospitality of the natives of the Highlands and that of those in Cumberland and Caernarvon are hardly fair. My own experience is that hospitality is a natural characteristic of mountain folk except in those districts where they have come into constant contact with tourists. In the tourist-ridden parts of the Scottish Highlands, the natives appear to me to be quite as ready to exploit the traveller as in any other mountain district wherever it may be. This volume includes two pages of Highland nomenclature which are both useful and instructive. The details of Mr. Poucher's technique in 'Photographic Notes' referred to in the preface might well be considerably more informative. Mr. Poucher does not need to worry himself about insinuations that his skies are faked or have been printed in. To experienced photographers, it is obvious that nothing of the kind has happened. Mr. Poucher probably develops his negatives himself and is thus able to control the development. For those who do not, the results must be a pure matter of chance and they are hardly worthy of being termed photographers.

To come now to what is after all the main features of the two books, namely the illustrations, it is difficult to single out examples from such

<sup>6</sup> *Saussure, Voyages*, vol. IV., p. 191.



an array of splendid pictures, so I will confine myself to naming a few which jump to the eye.

In *Escape to the Hills*, the frontispiece, 'Snowdon from the Capel Lakes,' is magnificent, also 'Cnicht from the south,' which with its two pines is a delightful suggestion of a background to a Bellini masterpiece. In the Lakeland section, there is a magnificent double page, 'The Pillar Rock,' also 'A wild day on Haystacks seen from the head of Buttermere,' a masterly rendering of a very difficult subject; and 'Derwentwater at eventide,' with lovely broken lights in the water. In the Scottish section, 'Tormish Bridge in Glen Strathglass' is a beautiful composition. Lastly, the double page, 'Glyder Fach and Bristly Ridge' is one of the best studies of snow in sun and shadow in either volume, although it is rivalled in *Scotland through the Lens* by 'Cliffs of Ben Nevis' (6), 'Looking upward to the summit of Ben Nevis' (68), and 'The Exit from No. 2 Gully' (71). The illustrations in this volume show a remarkably high level of quality possibly due to an impression that the reproduction in this book appears to be somewhat superior to that in the other. The only criticism I have to offer is that a few of the snow pictures show a lack of contrast in the lighting of the snow.

SYDNEY SPENCER.

*Les Conquêtes de ma Jeunesse.* By André Roch. Pp. xi, 175. Editions Victor Attinger, Neuchâtel and Paris, 1943.

The keyword to the title of this book is certainly the word 'Conquêtes'. The mere list of chapter headings is sensational, and a totalitarian climber might well covet such a superb list of brilliant expeditions. Yet the writing is agreeably straightforward, unpretentious and by no means influenced by totalitarian theories. It is tempting to speculate whether the author would agree with Mummery who once stated that he would still climb if mountain scenery ceased to exist, and would still frequent mountain tops if there were no climbing to be had on the way to them. Various passages in this book imply that M. Roch may be of this persuasion. However this may be, the standard of technical interest is so high that an ascent of the Aiguille du Plan in winter and a traverse of La Meije in very bad conditions appear almost commonplace by contrast with so many outstanding achievements.

The author is not an advocate of applying engineering methods for overcoming difficulties, nor does he believe in mountaineering as a method of advertising one's country or one's patriotism. He admits, too, that the pursuit of difficulty can be carried to ridiculous extremes. He considers the Fou and the Caïman to be among the most difficult of the 'classical' ascents, and recognises that such climbs become classical because they are typical of the district to which they belong.

It is the more remarkable that most of the expeditions described in this book were carried out in adverse circumstances, for M. Roch



and his friends were often too keen to wait patiently for favourable conditions. Among the many great climbs done were some that have only recently emerged from their status as rock gendarmes, and it is as a brilliant rock climber that the author appears at his happiest. On the other hand he has a keen appreciation of ice, and one of his most exciting chapters is devoted to his very remarkable first ascent of the formidable northern ice face of the Triolet. Another stirring account is given of the descent of the appalling northern precipices of the Dru in the company of his friend M. Robert Gréloz. This undefeated enthusiast had only just returned from a discouraging experience on the Verte. Close to the top of that mountain he had been dislodged by a small avalanche and had fallen the whole way down the precipitous northern ice slope on to the glacier some two thousand feet below. Although badly knocked about and still suffering he insisted on taking part in the expedition. There must have been some anxious moments for the climbers during the long descent, especially when they had to calculate how much of their spare rope was left and how much of the vertical cliffs below them still remained to be tackled with it.

Such records as these are indeed interesting examples of what great adventures can still be found in the Alps by mountaineers who have not yet adopted the extravagant methods of totalitarian climbing.

The illustrations are effective, many of them showing the striking aspects of the Chamonix Aiguilles.

C. F. MEADE.

## THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY

By F. OUGHTON

The following works have been added to the Library :—

### *Publications of Clubs and Societies*

- Alpine Club of Canada, Banff, Alberta.** The Canadian Alpine Journal. Vol. xxviii, No. 2 :  $9 \times 6$  : illustrations, sketch map. 1942-1943
- American Alpine Club, New York, U.S.A.** By-Laws and Register.  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$  : pp. 42. 1944
- Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.** Appalachia, N.S. Vol. ix, No. 7 :  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6$  : pp. 291-432 ; illustrations June 1943
- New Series, Vol. ix, No. 12 :  $9\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$  : " pp. 435-556 : " illustrations, sketch map. December 1943
- Bulletin. Vol. ix, N.S. Nos. 1-11 :  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$  : pp. 228. January-December 1943
- Association of British Members of the S.A.C., London.** Annual Report, and List of Members.  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$  : pp. 63. 1944
- Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland, London.** Camping. Vol. xxxix, Nos. 1-6 :  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  : pp. 83 : illustrations. January-December 1943
- Canterbury Mountaineering Club, Canterbury, N.Z.** The Canterbury Mountaineer : Extracts from The Canterbury Mountaineering Club's Journal. No. 12 : 1942-43 :  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$  : pp. 56 : illustrations, portraits. August 1943