

REVIEWS

Road to Rakaposhi. By George Band. Pp. 192, with 55 photographs in black and white, 3 maps and a diagram. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 1955. Price 16s.

East of Katmandu. By Tom Weir. Pp. 138, with 89 photographs in black and white, 2 in colour, and 2 maps. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh. 1955. Price 16s.

*Kanchenjunga.*¹ By John Tucker. Pp. 224, with 40 photographs in black and white, 4 maps and 2 diagrams. Elek Books, London. 1955. Price 21s.

More than Mountains. By John A. Jackson. Pp. 213, with 48 photographs in black and white, frontispiece in colour, 4 maps and 2 diagrams. George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London. 1955. Price 18s.

THE last ten years have seen a tremendous increase in the number of expeditions to the Himalayas. The spate of books which has resulted indicates that the widespread interest in mountaineering, which reached its climax in the ascent of Everest, was no mere temporary phenomenon. Perhaps the most potent reason for the renewed activity has been the lifting of many of the restrictions on travel in Nepal. But there are other reasons, as Eric Shipton points out in his foreword to Band's book on Rakaposhi: 'Whereas, before the war, attempts to climb the great peaks were comparatively rare, now, each year, we see many parties in the field, the great majority of these from European countries. In view of the economic conditions in Europe, and the enormous increase in the cost of travel, equipment and food, it may seem strange that so many young climbers can afford the time and find the money for these ventures. The answer is that financial stringency is of little importance when men are sufficiently determined to reach their goal . . . of the many climbers keen to go to the Himalaya few will be content to wait to be invited. . . . The great majority realise that if they are to go at all they must do so on their own initiative. So the small, private party will come increasingly into its own, and it will not be long, I believe, before its ascendancy is finally established.'

The expeditions described in these books belong in this category, and much of the writing possesses a quality of enthusiasm and immediacy often lacking in the official accounts of large-scale ventures. *Road to Rakaposhi* is the account of the 1954 Cambridge expedition to this 25,550-ft. peak. It is a pleasant book, largely in travelogue style, describing first the 7,600-mile journey overland of three members of the expedition in a Dormobile, then what is fashionably known as the 'acclimatisation period,' and finally the attempts on the mountain itself by ridges which had been tried previously by Secord and Vyvyan in 1938 and by Secord, Tilman, Gyr and Kappeler in 1947. And if they got little further than their forerunners, the Monk's Head, which

¹ For a note on the spelling of this name, see *A.J.* 60. 95.

in a 'tour de force' Band's party succeeded in climbing, may well prove the key to the route for a future expedition.

Band's book tells of the adventures of a small, private party whose members had climbed together for years in Britain and in the Alps. A similar type of expedition is described in Tom Weir's *East of Katmandu*. Three of this party had climbed together in Garhwal in 1950, and once again their main object was exploratory mountaineering in little-known country, with attempts on mountains of about 20,000 ft. where opportunity should offer. Despite the handicap of continual trouble with the porters, they succeeded in penetrating the now famous Rolwaling Khola and making the first ascents of three notable peaks near its head. Weir also tells us much about the people of this country; for example, his description of the ceremony for the souls of the dead Sherpa parents is among the most moving passages in the book.

The expedition was made in September and October, the finest time in the Himalayan year for all except really high climbing, and Tom Weir has certainly succeeded in capturing the beauty of this landscape. But the quite outstanding photographs which we have come to expect from both Weir and Scott have been spoilt by poor reproduction in a sepia tone, and the printing of the two colour photographs has not been a success.

East Nepal is also the scene of the expedition described in Jack Tucker's book. This is the story of the 1954 Kangchenjunga reconnaissance. Once again it is a small private party, comparable in many ways to the 1951 Everest expedition in that the members chose themselves and went on their own initiative to examine a route which the 'pundits' had declared impracticable.

After a useful introductory section on the early expeditions of Freshfield, Bauer, Dyhrenfurth and others which comprises Part I of the book, Tucker describes the origins of his own trip: 'The invitation was issued by one Gilmour Lewis, who signed himself "Expedition Secretary." . . . It was something of a shock to find that the expedition had neither funds nor equipment. The party was a little on the small side at that stage; it consisted of Lewis. . . . There was one thing, however, in which the party was not lacking: enthusiasm.' Tucker is always happiest in his anecdotes, many of which are priceless—for example, his story of the Sherpas' hoping to sieve all the 'worms' from the chicken noodle soup before the Sahib discovered the revolting miracle that had occurred. His book gives a clear and modest description of the achievements of this spirited party, but for whose enterprise the successful 1955 expedition would not have taken place. But above all it is a personal account told with all the enthusiasm of one whose cherished dream of climbing in the Himalayas has at last come true.

The motives that bring people to the hills are indeed various, as is shown by John Jackson's *More than Mountains*. The less-convincing half of this book concerns the *Daily Mail's* 'Abominable Snowman' expedition to Sola Khumbu. The rest consists of delightful reminiscences of the author's early climbing days at the Aircrew Mountain

Centre in Kashmir, and of his explorations in the Nilkanta region in Garhwal. These memories have matured well and the chapters possess a charming nostalgic quality not often found in recent Himalayan writing. I hope he will write more. There are two appendices: the first, which lists a bee, a dragonfly and a few butterflies—the results of some desultory collecting—is irrelevant here, but the second, on photography, contains much practical advice.

JOHN TYSON.

Eroismo e Tragedia sul Monte Api. By Piero Ghiglione. Garzanti, Milan.

THIS must be one of the strangest, most ill-fated parties ever to have climbed in the Himalaya. The approach and mountain largely unknown, the leader a man in his sixties, one of the party due back for examinations on a fixed date: it is like the setting for a novel whose tragic, inevitable conclusion overshadows even the first pages.

Signor Ghiglione has been at pains to give the plot in full. Indeed his style is prosaic, at times prosy. He emphasises the approach up the unknown Chamlia which gave access to the South face of Api. This proved clearly impossible, and the party moved round to the north. It was in a river-crossing that Bignami, one of the four Italians, was swept away by the flood. Arrived on the northern side, Dr. Rosenkrantz announced that he must be in Turin for examinations by June 29. This meant that the party had not time for a fourth camp and had to make the final attempt direct from the third. In uncertain weather Ghiglione set out, late, with Barengi and Rosenkrantz; but having to return, sent on the heroic Sherpa Gyaljen to join the others. It was not till two days later that Gyaljen reappeared at Camp II with his story: that Rosenkrantz had stopped short of the summit, suffering from altitude and bleeding at the nose; that he and Barengi had reached it, and the latter, unroped, had gone on to the lesser summit while Gyaljen returned to succour Rosenkrantz; that Barengi never reappeared; that he had spent the first night of the descent in a crevasse, nursing Rosenkrantz; then, when he died, a second night in the snow as he searched for the camps.

It is a very odd tale; and I am not going into the knotty question of whether the summit was reached at all. I do not see how that can be determined except by close questioning of Gyaljen, and I do not know whether that has been done. As reported here he is quite definite, and his plain account, interpreted by the Indian Lieutenant Puri who accompanied the expedition, is quite definite. Indeed, this part of the book is so unemotional (considering the circumstances, though Ghiglione does not minimise his grief) that the reader is inclined to believe it. The hero is Gyaljen, whose devotion, courage and endurance seem to have been beyond praise.

As a writer Ghiglione came across the old difficulty of swelling one twenty-three thousander out to fill a book. Much attention is given to the approach up the Chamlia, and some to the return; but here many of the observations which could fill out the pages are not made

but collected into an appendix at the end, which after the drama of the ascent the reader does not want. The actual climbing, the reconnaissance and the establishment of Camps I and II, moves with disconcerting speed. But the final story from Camp III is gripping, and I for one was unable to put down the book until I had finished it.

Of all recent expeditions this must be the most easy to criticise, as well as the most tragic. The Himalaya are not lenient to mistakes; and the book is a warning, no less than an astonishing episode in the story of their climbing. Let him who is quite blameless cast the first stone.

WILFRID NOYCE.

Schweizer Führer Erzählen. Tales by a number of Swiss guides. Orell Füssli Verlag.

THERE have been several attempts by guides to give an account of their life: what they think, what they feel, what they say when they are leading clients, good, bad and indifferent, up the peaks. Usually the attempts have been made by guides well known for great exploits, by Christian Klucker, by Armand Charlet, by Gaston Rébuffat. Their stories will be to a degree specialised. For me the interest of the present volume lies not least in the ordinary nature of most of the ascents described; that is to say, these are climbs with which many British guideless parties will be familiar, and which we are now seeing through the very different eyes of a number of Swiss guides.

Storm, naturally, plays a great and at times almost too continuous part in lending excitement to the stories. A more interesting spice is given by the idiosyncrasies of the very varied tourists here assembled. There is the man who insists on going right to the top, despite the weather (rather like the American in *Premier de Cordée*); the average, guideless party which deviates on a glacier and pays for it with its life; or the lady who makes the guides turn the other way and her husband hold up a barrier of garments while she completes her morning lavatory.

This seems at first a comfortable, bedside book; but as you read, you will find yourself firmly held by the accounts of hardships endured, and strength needed even on 'ordinary' jobs by the guides, who are tested to a degree that most of us never realise. We have here a manifesto of the profession.

WILFRID NOYCE.

The Marching Wind. By Leonard Clark. Pp. 347. Hutchinson & Co., London. 1955. 21s.

CONSIDERED as a contribution to an interesting mountain problem—whether Amne Machin is higher than Everest, or not—this is a disappointing book. That it should be inferior in style to the recent books by Harrer, Patterson, or Migot² is not surprising, for they set a high standard. Yet comparisons are inevitable.

² Reviewed in *A.J.* 59. 355; 59. 478; and 60. 189.

Mr. Clark's opening remark, in his 'Author's Note'—'I think I'll take the bull by the horns right here'—is indicative of him, with its semblance of the Tough Guy; Four Square, Straight-from-the-Shoulder stuff that, in this book at any rate, does not ring quite true. One notes the same thing later, as in his advice (p. 176) on the best argument with an angry Tungun: level your pistol at his head and say, 'Scram, you son of a bitch!'; or in his pretence (pp. 190-1) of casual indifference about the results of his examination of Amne Machin. Throughout, he attacks the critics of former estimates of the height of this mountain, yet his own results are almost ludicrously bad. How can one take seriously an estimate that makes a mountain's height anything between, say, 27,000 and 32,000 ft., with a preference for 29,661?

It is worth while considering some earlier views about Amne Machin. The mountain lies in approximately $34\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N., $99\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ E. Dr. Karl Futterer in 1898³; Filchner in 1904⁴; General Pereira in 1922⁵; Gordon Thompson,⁶ J. F. Rock⁷ and others, have travelled in this region, with inconclusive results. Pereira, at a height of 13,000 ft., noted Amne Machin at a distance of about 70 miles and guessed that it must be well over 25,000 ft., as it dwarfed everything else.⁸ He was said to have remarked later, to J. F. Rock, that it 'might prove higher than Everest.'⁹ This prompted Rock to undertake an expedition to the region, but he did not have a theodolite and could not take the height of Amne Machin, though from other observations (he was 50 miles distant) he concluded that the mountain was over 28,000 ft. (*Nat. Geographic Mag.*, p. 185). As the *Geographical Journal* commented (lxxv, 284), this eye estimate did not inspire great confidence.

During the late war, American airmen reported having seen, whilst flying at over 30,000 ft., a mountain higher than they were (see, for

³ *G. J.* xii. 520; xiii, 430.

⁴ *G. J.* xxv. 562. Dr. Tafel, who accompanied Lieut. Filchner on some of his journeys, as well as making his own independent explorations, appears to have reckoned the Amne Machin mountains as being only 20,000 ft. high (see *G. J.* xlviii. 162).

⁵ *G. J.* lxi. 124.

⁶ *G. J.* lxvii. 2.

⁷ *G. J.* lxxv. 284.

⁸ *Peking to Lhasa* (compiled by Sir Francis Younghusband), p. 116. General Sir Cecil Pereira, it should be noted, deliberately denied the attribution to his brother of the view that Amne Machin might be higher than Everest. '... his studied opinion, based on what after all could only be the roughest of estimates made by a traveller who had seen many of the world's highest peaks, was as I have just stated' (i.e. that the height must be at least 25,000 ft., and might be anything). *G. J.* lxiv. 104.

⁹ *National Geographic Magazine*, February 1930, p. 134. But doubt must exist as to the accuracy of Rock's report of this conversation, for not only have we the denial of Sir Cecil Pereira (just quoted) but the magazine *Life*, October 3, 1949, p. 104, records that 'last week in Rome, Dr. Rock inexplicably reversed a story he has held to for more than 20 years,' by telling his interviewer that Amne Machin was 'definitely not over 20,000 ft.' Those interested in the question may care to compare the photographs in *Life* (*id.*, pp. 104-5) by Rock, Rowan N. Neff of the USAAF (March 1943) and Mr. Moon Chin (April 1948).

example, *The New York Times*, March 31, 1944). Mr. Clark makes frequent mention of these 'off-course Hump pilots,' but he does not appear to have tried to get any evidence from them—at any rate, he quotes none. In *A.J.* 55. 320, reference is made to these claims; enquiries had been put to officers of Nos. 2 and 4 Combat Cargo Squadrons, USAAF, in 1945, as they claimed to know the pilots concerned at a time when they had been stationed, earlier in the War, at Chengtu. On the advice of these officers, a request was sent on June 18, 1945, to the H.Q. Air Transport Command, USAAF, then at Tezgaon, and it elicited the following reply, dated 29 June:—

'Other than unconfirmed pilot reports, there is no factual evidence of a peak higher than Mount Everest in the area between India and China.'

Signed :
GEORGE COHEN, Major,
Air Corps, I.S. Officer.

Until some cogent evidence to contradict this statement has been obtained, it seems useless to base arguments on reports of these Hump pilots so far as Amne Machin is concerned.

It might be worthwhile if the whole question of these Hump pilots could be investigated in America. So far as one remembers, the customary route on the 'Hump' run was from Tinsukia (the last aerodrome in Assam) to Kunming or Chungking or Chengtu. No doubt, there were numerous variations, but a glance at the map will show that a Hump pilot must have been so immensely off-course to have been anywhere near Amne Machin that they would have to have had a totally different objective from, say, Chungking to have been within sighting distance of Amne Machin. It would be intelligible if a pilot got off-course between India and Chungking and saw either Namcha Barwa (approx. 29° N., 95° E.) or Minya Konka (approx. $29\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N., 103° E.); but unless one was flying direct from India to, let us say, Lanchow or Si-ning in the province of Kansu, which is utterly removed from what was normally regarded as the 'Hump' run, one would not come within hundreds of miles of Amne Machin. If any pilot could do this by accident, one would cease to place any reliance on any statements he ever made. What is needed is more facts and figures, as Mr. Clark himself once observed (p. 181), and not absurd expostulations about armchair explorers jumping 'feet first into every traveller who returns without his guts being armour-plated.'

In 1948 an American, Milton Reynolds, organised a flight to test the height of Amne Machin. Readers of *Appalachia* for 1948 (xxvii, pp. 100-1) will find an instructive short summary of this rather discreditable business, by Mr. Bradford Washburn. The Reynolds party returned to China, saying that they had been forced back from a stage on a flight to India, though it was surmised they had tried for Amne Machin really. Wherever they had been, it was without the sanction of the Chinese and if they had flown to the mountain, no

reliable results seem to have been obtained. Mr. Washburn refers to an unnamed civilian pilot on a flight from Chinese Turkestan to Lanchow, in mid-March (query 1948),¹⁰ who claimed to have flown over Amne Machin at 22,500 ft. and it was 'way below' him. Not much reliance can be placed on the testimony of an unnamed airman. Then, in April 1948, Mr. Moon Chin, of the Central Air Transport Corporation, flew from Lanchow and reported that Amne Machin was less than 20,000 ft. Mr. Washburn, who had a chance of going on the Moon Chin flight, for rather inscrutable reasons declined the chance.¹¹

To call a mountain down from over 30,000 ft. (the Hump pilots' claim) to under 20,000 is certainly drastic and we can be grateful to Mr. Clark (p. 179) that he questioned local inhabitants about aeroplanes, 'and they were emphatic in saying none had ever flown over the Amne Machin central peaks.' Whilst it is obvious that both General Pereira and Dr. Rock were only guessing at heights, it is strange that they should have been so *very* wide of the mark, if the Moon Chin claim is true. Perhaps some figure, midway between the two extremes, may prove more accurate and a remark by the Editor of *The Geographical Review* (xxxiv. 387) be justified: 'The probability of new "Everests" is slight; their fate is likely to be that of Minya Konka, once accredited with more than 30,000 feet and now scaled down to less than 25,000 feet.'

Mr. Clark had, clearly, a fine chance before him to solve a real uncertainty, but, as already said, an estimate that may be anything between 27,000 and 32,000 ft. is no use. Moreover, one would like to know how reliable as surveyors were Prince Dorje and Solomon Ma; Mr. Bradford Washburn's criticism of their readings may be read in *Appalachia*, xxvii, pp. 507-8.

As for photographs of Amne Machin, Mr. Clark provides two. Anything more unconvincing could hardly be imagined—yet, ostensibly, the examination of the mountain was the object of the expedition. At what height were these two pictures taken? Camp 14, the nearest to the mountain (see map, p. 39) was only 12,005 ft. (p. 176), and Camp 15, on the way back, 12,462 ft. Is it really credible that the mountains shown on p. 272 are over 17,000 ft. higher than the spectator—perhaps even 20,000 ft. higher? It can hardly be wondered if mountaineers, whom Mr. Clark rather despises, cannot accept his results.

We would fain part from the author in a good humour, however, though much of his work will have to be done again.¹² He travelled adventurously, in a hard part of the world, rendered dangerous by the Ngoloks, the mountain tribe living round Amne Machin. His objects seem in part to have been political; he had the backing of General

¹⁰ Rowan Neff's flight was in March 1943 from India to China: he was flying at 22,000 ft. and thought the mountain he saw 'much higher.'

¹¹ These flights are studied in *Berge der Welt*, vol. IV, pp. 167-9.

¹² If political barriers could only be lowered, and mountaineers admitted to the territory, here would be a splendid objective for the Mount Everest Foundation's benevolence.

Ma Pu Fang, the Tungun Governor of Chinghai and leader of the only remaining Nationalist army in China in 1949 ; and also the blessing of the Panchen Lama, who may have hoped for indirect help to his own aims (perhaps even of ousting the Dalai Lama from his throne in Lhasa). After leaving Amne Machin, the travellers visited the sources of the Hoang Ho, and eventually returned to Sining by way of the Tsaidam Swamp and Koko-Nor, in time to witness the collapse of the Nationalist forces and to see Governor Ma fly the country, followed by 600,000 ounces of gold.

H. W. TOBIN.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

The Mountain World. 1955. English version edited by Malcolm Barnes. Published by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, for the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research. Pp. 222. 55 illustrations, 12 maps and sketches. 25s.

THIS issue opens with an article by G. Winthrop Young entitled 'Courage, and Mountain Writing,' in which he discusses the reasons for the decline in the standard of mountain literature, suggesting that it is now found less readable partly owing to defects in the writing and partly owing to a definite change of taste in the public that reads climbing books.

The ascents of both K2 and Cho Oyu are described ; great as were these achievements there can be few who have not read of them, and some readers will probably turn with relief to the accounts of expeditions in less-known ranges.

Mathias Rebitsch write of the German-Austrian expedition to the Western Karakorum in the course of which a 23,945-ft. peak above the Batura glacier was climbed for the first time.

Alfred Tissières gives a brief account of the Cambridge University expedition to Rakaposhi. Bad weather ruined the chances of this party, but the question of a route to the summit has now been solved.

The possibilities of the employment of midget aircraft to assist in attacks on the highest mountains are discussed by Othmar Gurtner ; this is a controversial question and one may ask if the ascent of K2 would have been the achievement it undoubtedly was, if it had been found possible to fly stores and equipment to a height of 24,600 ft. (see the illustration opposite p. 72). Many may think that the aeroplane should be kept out of mountaineering except for rescue and relief work.

George Lowe writes about the Barun Valley expedition and Marcel Kurz continues his valuable Himalayan Chronicle. It is still uncertain whether Barenghi reached the summit of Api and the mystery may never be solved.¹³

The scientific background of the 1953 Mount Everest expedition is discussed by L. G. C. Pugh. The immense value of the experience gained on the Cho Oyu expedition is clearly brought out in this article.

¹³ See *A.J.* 59. 462.

John Pascoe writes a delightful account of a journey in the New Zealand Alps, across the Main Divide, in the course of which the party encountered every variety of problem, ice-fall, river, bush and gorge. Those who do not know the country will obtain an insight into the difficulties of bush and mountain travel in New Zealand.

An account of the Austrian expedition to the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru is given by Heinrich Klier. Several first ascents were made, but an attempt on Yerupaja was defeated by soft snow.

Climbing possibilities in some of the less-known ranges of the world are reviewed in articles on the mountains of Turkey,¹⁴ the Hoggar and Ethiopia. Other articles deal with Sherpa training, the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, a lone flight over Everest, and the 1954 Japanese Himalayan expedition.

The photographs, as usual, are excellent. The descriptive captions refer to them by numbers but the illustrations themselves bear no number. It would make for ease of reference if each plate were numbered in the top right- or left-hand corner.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

Mémoires d'un Sherpa. An autobiography of Ang Tharkay told to Basil P. Norton and translated into French by H. Delgove. Pp. 210. 10 illustrations and maps. Amiot Dumont. 1954.

THIS, the first book ever by a Sherpa porter, deserves to be widely read and it is to be hoped that it will soon be published in the English language, preferably from the original English MS. prepared by B. P. Norton, and with more illustrations.

Ang Tharkay needs no introduction to climbers all over the world. A 'Tiger' *par excellence* among high altitude porters, he started as a peasant of Tibetan extraction, living in conditions of great poverty in Sola Khumbu, tilling his parents' small plot of ground near the slopes of Mount Everest, and with no knowledge of Western ways of life. In spite of obstacles encountered through fierce competition, his objective of joining an Everest expedition was attained through dogged perseverance and the help of his beloved friend and famous porter Jingmey. Subsequently he has taken part in innumerable major and minor expeditions and created such a good impression wherever he went that, with the exception of Tenzing, he rapidly became perhaps the most famous of all Himalayan porters.

His book is confined mainly to his life of mountaineering. It makes no attempt to enter into technicalities, it is not concerned with details of climbs, but tells of the human aspect of expedition life, and of what impressed him in working with both sahibs and coolies. The book is well worth reading because it gives a frank account of these expeditions from the 'high altitude' porter's point of view. It is an eye-opener and maintains its interest from beginning to end. They are aptly

¹⁴ According to *The Times Atlas* the height of Ararat is 16,915 ft. and not 18,095 ft., as stated on p. 166.

termed 'memoirs,' for he is illiterate, and describes purely from memory experiences, joys and troubles during the greater part of a life devoted almost entirely to helping others to visit and climb the mountains to which he belongs.

The story opens with a description of his early home life and humble circumstances, and follows on with accounts of his five expeditions to Everest, and a number of other important expeditions. The third part of the book, comprising seven chapters, is devoted to the French expedition to Annapurna, in which he speaks with great regard for the leader M. Herzog, and the other French climbers. The cheerful basis of friendship and equality, with which the Sherpas were treated by the French, created a very favourable impression which is warmly acknowledged by Ang Tharkay. British expeditions probably have something to learn from this expedition in sharing the sport of mountaineering with their own porters.

These memoirs are told with such a natural modesty and sincerity that it is hard, without first-hand experience of the hardships of high climbing, to appreciate merely from the book, the greatness of some of his achievements. For example, his ascent in 1933 from the North col on Everest to Camp V for the second time and thence the same day to Camp VI is disposed of in the bald statement that 'nous atteignons son emplacement dans la soirée.' The account does not mention that this was a climb of 4,400 ft. at a great height on the cold North face of Everest with a load and without oxygen.

It is a pity that, owing to lack of time before publication, more illustrations were not included from the vast array which must be available out of the large number of expeditions in which Ang Tharkay has taken part. The narrative must have lost some of its originality in the process of transcribing. However, much credit is due to B. P. Norton's writing and H. Delgove's translation for the result, considering that the ideas had to pass from Nepali to Hindu and Bengali through English into French. The writers have done well to preserve the narrator's original tale. For it is in keeping with the character of the author that the memoirs pass lightly and without embellishment over incidents of great fortitude and endeavour. But the reader must not let himself be misled by this into thinking some of the accounts dull, for in truth there is high drama in many of the events described.

There are refreshing touches of humour and a vein of mischievousness running through the narrative, and above all an unerring sense of values in his recognition of the personal qualities of those with whom he has climbed and in his enjoyment of the natural beauties of the Himalayas.

C. R. COOKE.

Flora delle Alpi. By Luigi Fenaroli. Pp. xiv, 369. 44 coloured plates, 58 photographs, 262 sketches. Aldo Martello, Milan. 1955.

THIS very attractive book is an elaboration of the same author's *Flora delle Alpi* of 1932, and shows how great an advance has been made in

the science of botany in the interval. Of its three sections the first deals briefly with the various physical and climatic factors which produce an alpine flora, the second enumerates the plant associations encountered at various levels and on different soils, and the third is the Flora itself. This is based on a novel and ingenious scheme of identification by contrast of two simple mutually exclusive features, elimination of alternatives leading inevitably to the particular plant under examination. The system seems foolproof on paper: if it works equally well in practice, it will be a boon to the many flower-lovers, to whom a new find is a challenge to a bout of name-hunting. The saving of space achieved by this method enables the author to include many interesting facts on the uses and habits of certain plants, e.g. the curious ability of *Botrychium lunaria* to orient its leaves in a N.-S. direction, whence its Italian name of 'Pianta Bussola.' A notable feature of the book is the large number of excellent drawings, coloured plates and photographs. It is a pity, in so fine a production, that the range of colours employed, especially the reds and blues, too often fails to reproduce the hues of nature, but this defect is more than compensated by the superb quality of the fifty-eight photographs of flowers *in situ*, which form a worthy climax to a fascinating book.

H. E. L. PORTER.

Fauna and Flora of Nepal Himalaya. Vol. I. Edited by H. Kihara. Pp. vii, 390, x. Illustrations. Printed by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, on behalf of the Fauna and Flora Research Society of Kyoto University. 1955.

THIS work constitutes the first part of the 'Scientific Results of the Japanese Expeditions to Nepal Himalaya' in 1952 and 1953 and therein a number of scientists report on the various collections made.

By far the largest sections are those on 'Flowering Plants & Ferns' by Siro Kitamaru, and on 'Butterflies' by Takashi Shirozu. Other sections are devoted to Algae, Lichens, Mosses, Dragonflies, Mayfly, Nymphs, Rice Weevils, and *Drosophila*.

The two expeditions appear to have been organised jointly by the Japanese Alpine Club and the Fauna and Flora Research Society of Kyoto University.

The mountaineering activities of the expeditions are referred to only in passing, in the Preface and in the opening chapter.

The 1952 expedition was in the nature of a reconnaissance. Between September and December the party appears to have travelled up the Marsyandi to Manangbhot, where an abortive attempt was made on Annapurna IV, and then to have crossed the Larkya La at the head of the Dudh Khola and travelled down the Buri Gandaki.

In 1953 the mountaineers made a serious attempt on Manaslu, from the north, reaching a point about 1,300 ft. from the summit. Meanwhile, from March till August, the scientists made an extended tour, during which they visited the valleys of the Kali Gandaki, Marsyandi, and Buri Gandaki rivers, crossing the high passes from valley to valley.

Kyoto University is to be congratulated on publishing the scientific results of these expeditions so soon, and thereby giving great and deserved encouragement to the young men who made the collections, but to judge by the section on Botany considerable controversy will certainly arise. Mr. Kitamura publishes descriptions of no fewer than forty-eight new species and varieties of plants and while some are doubtless valid, others will surely be disputed.

The book is well printed, but unfortunately a heavy glossy paper has been used. This makes the book, the binding of which is somewhat inferior, very awkward to handle. It is well illustrated by line drawings and excellent photographs which, most unfortunately, are but poorly reproduced.

D. LOWNDES.

The Island Hills. By Campbell Steven. Pp. 190, 35 photographs, sketch maps. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1955. Price 18s.

AMID the welter of recent books about remote regions such as Asia, Antarctica and South America, all so inaccessible to most people, it is a welcome relief to find one like Mr. Campbell Steven's, which describes expeditions within the compass of ordinary mortals. Most of the expeditions were made by Mr. Steven at weekends, with an office desk in Glasgow inexorably waiting for him on Monday morning, and the variety of the islands visited within this time-limit testifies to the perseverance, determination and imagination of the author. It is not surprising to learn that Mr. Steven was a Commando during the War, and he brings Commando tactics to bear on the planning of his island expeditions.

Naturally the islands near Glasgow are first visited, but Ailsa Craig cost him a workaday Monday owing to a rough sea preventing the return to the mainland on Sunday. His account of the rock-climbing, caves and bird-life makes one long to visit this rock, so well known by sight. Arran, Bute, Jura, Mull, Eigg and Rum are among those described, but the romantic-sounding Isles of the Sea, and Staffa, Iona and Skye, have perhaps the best chapters. His attempt on the Cuillin Ridge—'the grandest day's scrambling in Britain'—failed. 'But therein—I saw at last—lay its success. We could rejoice unreservedly that "the Ridge in a day" was still a challenge.' This philosophic outlook should be noted by other disappointed mountaineers. The well known but inaccessible bird-sanctuary of Handa is his most distant island, but he plans even further excursions—to North Rona, Sile Skerry, and even St. Kilda itself.

While the book does not describe tigerish feats on super-severe rock-climbs, there is a lot of sound mountaineering lore incorporated in the delightfully written descriptions, and his knowledge of birds and plants, and of the sea, and of history and poetry is brought in to make a fascinating series of narratives. It is all enlivened by his typically Scottish sense of humour.

His thirty-five well-chosen photographs, nine or ten sketch maps, and his careful descriptions of his routes would be of great help to anybody planning a 'holiday at home' among the Western Isles.

G. G. MACPHEE.

The Mountains of Ireland. By D. D. C. Pochin Mould. Pp. 160. 48 illustrations. 1 map. B. T. Batsford, Ltd. London, 1955. 21s.

THIS is not primarily a mountaineering book but rather a general topographical survey of the principal mountain regions of Ireland. The author, a geologist, gives her accounts a scientific emphasis and her design is apparently to render a basic interpretation of Irish hill scenery in terms of geology and patterns of plant distribution, and to illustrate the theme by references to folk-lore, archaeology, and ecclesiastical and modern history on the lines so successfully followed by the late Dr. Lloyd Praeger.

But it is far from being solely a scientific book. The reader will find not prosaic accounts of routes and climbs but abundant and picturesque descriptions of mountain and sea-coast, distinguishing the separate characteristics of the different regions, descriptions which show real insight into the beauties of the mountain and coast scenery of the Atlantic seaboard particularly.

The book is well illustrated with photographs but lacks an adequate map.

J. W. HEALY.

Hochgebirgsführer durch die Berner Alpen. Vol. V. Grindelwald-Meiringen-Grimsel-Münster. S.A.C. Section Berne. Pp. 300. 46 outline sketches. A. Francke A.G., Berne, 1955. Price 15 frs. 95 cents.

THIS, the fourth volume of the revised *Berner Alpen* to appear, is as excellent as its predecessors and requires only a very short notice. The area covered includes the important Wetterhorn and Schreckhorn groups. 580 different routes are described, many with variations, and the forty-six outline sketches are admirably executed.

It is unfortunate that lack of space has made it impossible to include any historical information about the peaks in the area, as has been done in volumes II and III, but many new routes, discovered since the first edition appeared in 1908, have had to be included.

With the appearance of volume IV, expected this year, the revision of the *Berner Alpen* will be complete.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

Banner in the Sky. By J. R. Ullman. Collins. 10s. 6d.

'For Jim, Bill, David and also (why not?) Susan.' Whimsy is not quite our line, but we are still wondering why not Susan? What had the poor girl done? Cut the rope?

'There are many ways,' Mr. Ullman writes, 'in which this story resembles the true story of the first climbing of the Matterhorn.' We found no resemblances except the date. Neither the men concerned

nor the story, nor the mountain have any recognisable relation to those involved in the 1865 accident.

The author has absolutely no sense of period and very little idea of procedures normal on mountains. The Citadel, as the pseudo-Matterhorn, is called, appears to tower above Monte Rosa, and was, it seems, the last alpine summit to be reached, or rather 'conquered.' No attempts on it had been made for fifteen years prior to the successful ascent. At midsummer all crevasses were uncovered and solitary glacier travel was safe. Several huts existed high above glaciers. Guides carried *jugs* of tea in their sacks. The hero was given training in the technique of belays and rappels; he also sheltered in a cave during a blizzard but did not put his sweater on till the blizzard was over.

Two guides set out separately and alone on the final climb to the summit; neither carried a rope, this oversight naturally led to difficulties when one fell, broke his arm and had to be rescued.

Notwithstanding these irritations, the author invents quite an exciting story which will no doubt give great pleasure, but not to the readers of this JOURNAL.

Die Alpen. JANUARY. 'Ärzte als Erschliesser der Alpen': by J. J. Jenny. 'La face nord du Doldenhorn': by M. Brandt. 'La paroi nord du Mont Blanc de Cheilon': by J. Rossier.

FEBRUARY. 'A propos de Tauredunum; un nouveau document': by L. Seylaz. 'Kampf um den Peutereygrat': by R. Hechtel. 'Escalade de la face ouest du sommet ouest de l'Argentine': by P. Jaquet. 'Im Unteralptal und der Portgèra-Grat': by A. Wettstein.

MARCH/APRIL. Double number devoted to Avalanches. Articles dealing with Avalanches from many aspects and seventeen pages of illustrations.

MAY. 'Frühlingsfahrt zum Gross Ruchen': by R. Schönbächler. 'Die Tomliwand': by M. Eiselin. 'Berninaberger': by M. Szadrowsky. Extracts from J. L. Manget's 'Itinéraire du voyage à Chamouny' (1829). 'La Garde aérienne suisse de sauvetage': by A. Burger.

JUNE. 'Su Alto': by E. Gauchat and M. Bron. 'La maison bourgeoise de Grimentz': by I. Marietan. 'Die Spechte unserer Bergwälder': by A. Walkmeister. 'Österreichische Arktisexpedition 1954 nach Spitzbergen': by P. Vigerust.

JULY. 'Die Erstbesteigung der Dufourspitze vor 100 Jahren': by E. Ambhül. 'Spedizione all' Api, 1954': by P. Ghiglione. 'Centenaire de l'ascension du Mont Rose': by L. Seylaz. 'Les variations des glaciers des Alpes suisses 1954': by P. L. Mercanton and A. Renaud.

AUGUST. 'Traversée des Aiguilles des Maisons Blanches': by E. Pidoux. 'Die Erschliessung der Blauen Berge in Neusüdwaes': by G. F. J. Bergman. 'Das "Alpenerlebnis" in der Satire "Heutelia" (1658)': by W. Weigum.

SEPTEMBER. 'Zwei Jahre weiterer Forschung im Hölloch': by H. Nünlist. 'Berge der Insel Zypern': by J. Sanseverino. 'Le Valtournanche il y a 100 ans': by M. Retrog (Gorret). 'Visages du Pakistan': by J.-J. Buetiger.

OCTOBER. 'La paroi nord de l'Ebnefluh': by M. Brandt. 'L'Homme des neiges': by S. Pranavananda. 'Die subjektive Gefahr im Bergsteigen': by K. Greitbauer. 'Obergabelhorn-Südwand': by M. Wunsch. 'Marmolata di Rocca-Südwand': by M. Niedermann. 'Göscheneralp': by J. Brun.

NOVEMBER. 'Tre gite nel Libano': by G. Tod. 'Die Exkursion Vadians an den Pilatussee, 1518': by T. Schlatter. 'Das Wägital und seine Berge': by C. Hauser. 'Solitude himalayenne': by P. Vittoz.

DECEMBER. An issue devoted to 'Winter and Ski' with articles on many aspects of the mountains in winter, including: 'En patrouille dans le Grand Nord': by C. Wyatt (an account of a journey in Northern Canada). 'Ski courts': by E. Quinche. 'Rätikonrundfahrt': by W. Uttendoppler. 'Der Kanadier Rettungsschlitten': by C. Jost. 'Due passi in montagna': by P. Carmine. 'Strömungen im Skilauf': by C. Rubi. 'Trois heures dans une crevasse de l'Aletschfirn': by J. K. de F.

La Montagne et Alpinisme. FEBRUARY. Jean Franco contributes an article on the Makalu Reconnaissance Expedition of 1954, and Guido Magnone deals with the equipment taken by the party. In another article he describes the attractions of Val d'Isère as a winter sports centre. Within a radius of ten kilometres there are fifty-one peaks and passes accessible to the skier, of which thirty exceed 3,000 metres in height.

The first ascent of the north face of the Ailefroide Orientale is described by Paul Keller.

APRIL. This number contains a brief description of the mountains of Iran and a summary of the French 1954 expedition to the Elburz range by François Prévot. Serge Coupé gives a vivid account of the first winter ascent of the very difficult South-east arête of Pic Gaspard. The Austrian ascent of Cho Oyu is described by Dr. Herbert Tichy, and Maurice Laloue writes about the refuges of the C.A.F.

JUNE. Rudolf Peters tells his own story of his unsuccessful attempt on the North face of the Grandes Jorasses in 1934 with R. Haringer. During the descent, in terrible weather, Haringer slipped and fell 1,800 ft. to his death.¹⁵ The Bernina Alps are briefly described by Alain de Chatellus; those contemplating a first visit to the district may find this article helpful. Extracts from the diary of Lino Lacedelli provide an account of the attainment of the summit of K2.

¹⁵ An account of the accident is to be found in *A. J.* 46, 420, where the escape of Herr Peters is described as 'perhaps the most extraordinary chronicled in these pages.'

OCTOBER. This issue is devoted to the Makalu expedition. Lionel Terray describes the successful assault, and articles by other members of the party deal with the oxygen equipment and acclimatisation. Pierre Bordet summarises the results of the geological survey of the district.

DECEMBER. The French translation of George Band's account of the ascent of Kangchenjunga is published in this number. The climbing possibilities of Tunisia are reviewed by Suzanne Valentini; in spite of their low altitude these ranges offer opportunities to the rock-climber. The chief problem, the South face of Zaghouan, is still unsolved. Georges Livanos gives a modest and restrained account of the first ascent of the North-west face of the Cima di Terranova, 'le dernier grand problème' of the Civetta massif. The climb was summarised in *Alpinisme*, Autumn 1954—'750 mètres (dont 350 mètres facile dans le socle), 29 heures d'escalade effective, 125 pitons.'

The final article is a continuation of one appearing in *La Montagne*, December 1954, and gives particulars of a further selection of the 'chalets skieurs' of the C.A.F.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

T. A. H. PARSONS