

REVIEWS

Makalu. By Jean Franco. Pp. 215, Illus. B. Arthaud, Paris. 1956.

GINO WATKINS once said that the well-conducted expedition should have no adventures. Yet the national Himalayan expedition must, both for prestige and financial reasons, have its expedition book and the lay public demands adventure and 'derring-do.' It must, therefore, have been particularly difficult for M. Franco to write his account of the successful French expedition to Makalu. For the Makalu expedition was, in fact, so well conducted that it had no adventures. As M. Franco puts it: 'A 8000 comme au sommet du Mont Blanc, au sommet nous étions neuf. Trois ascensions en trois jours, ce n'est pas une conquête. Et nous n'avions même pas eu froid aux pieds.'

Inevitably, therefore, in reviewing this book, one reviews the expedition and tries to discover what useful lessons can be drawn from it. One's overall impression is one of orthodoxy. All ingredients for success were thoroughly appreciated beforehand, and this mixing was carefully carried out according to what is now a well defined recipe. Their equipment and so on had no particular novelties, they had their autumn reconnaissance and their acclimatisation period, the mountain was not rushed, the ratio of Sherpas to climbers (about 3 to 1) was typical, they took open-circuit oxygen whose performance seems to have been similar to the 1955 British sets. One expects nowadays that an expedition that follows all this should, given average luck with the greatest imponderable, the weather, have success. The French had exceptional luck with the weather (unbroken fine weather during the assault period) and so, having followed all these rules meticulously were enabled to reap a complete harvest. Hence the impression one gets in the book is of the easy inevitability of success. But this conceals the importance and perfection of the final factor: leadership. In the book this is extremely unobtrusive, as it probably was on the expedition. And yet Franco managed to weld a group of seven highly individualistic climbers into a team that followed these rules, and yet kept the concepts of 'team,' 'plan,' which are anathema to most climbers, in the background. As a result it was clearly a very happy party who enjoyed themselves and climbed their mountain. And it seems clear that because of this they would still have climbed their mountain even if they had had worse than average luck with the weather.

Makalu also illustrates well another interesting subject: oxygen. It is not technically a very difficult mountain, and it could obviously have been climbed without oxygen. And equally obviously, if it had been climbed without using it, probably only one *cordée* would have reached

the summit. But the use of it kept all eight climbers sufficiently fresh for them all to partake of the success. This, to my mind, is the most important argument for its use. For there is a great difference in the satisfaction of actually getting to the summit and the less tangible satisfaction of knowing that by one's 'support' of a summit pair (in conducting Sherpa convoys on the lower reaches) one has enabled the pair to reach the summit. The other two points in favour of oxygen are well illustrated too. That of enjoyment, what one might call tactical enjoyment, i.e. actually enjoying one's high-altitude climbing, is already well known and the chapter on the assault emphasises this once more. The other point is one of logistics. To revert to the classic analogy of the pyramid—the large base of men and equipment enabling the capstone of one pair of climbers to be built—by using oxygen one can build one's pyramid much more quickly and therefore have a much smaller base in terms of men, equipment and time. This possibility of speeding up of operations is graphically shown by (and is perhaps a portent of the future) the third assault pair who on their first day climbed, using oxygen, nearly 5,000 ft. from the advanced base (Camp III) to Camp VI and on the second day, after going up to the summit, (more than 2,000 ft.) returned to Camp III. (It also shows how fantastically fit they must have been.)

Lacking as it is in doubt and drama, the book is remarkably readable. 'Preparations' hardly occupy any space, the 'approach march' is as brief as one can expect, the members of the party are never formally introduced but develop naturally as personalities, each with his own particular foibles, during the course of the book. Franco presents the actual ascent as a being almost carefree without any overbearing sense of a deep mission (apart from one revealing little sentence when the summit has been reached, 'Devies sera content maintenant'). The whole atmosphere is best summed up by Couzy's remark to Franco after he and Terray have returned from the summit. 'C'est comme dans les Alpes, la course de la matinée.' Inevitably one begins to draw a comparison with its predecessor Annapurna—both the expedition and the book. Anyone who has read both can draw his own conclusions. To those that haven't, Gino Watkins' remark and Armand Charlet's misquote 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'alpinisme' used in another context, make perhaps fair comments. It is an irony of history to think that in fifty years' time the Makalu expedition will have sunk into almost complete oblivion when contrasted with Annapurna. One cannot help remembering Scott and Amundsen.

Lucien Devies, who seemed to occupy a sort of *éminence grise* position in relation to the expedition, contributes a useful summary, in the form of a foreword, of Himalayan expeditions to the eight-thousanders. His concluding remark that Makalu is probably at the time of writing

the most difficult one climbed is perhaps arguable, but it is fair to point out that the time of writing seems to have been before Kangchenjunga, for it is only mentioned afterwards almost by way of an addendum. There are thirty illustrations of which seven are in particularly glossy colour. Some of these latter would undoubtedly have been more restful in black and white. The black and whites are of normal competence and, rare for a French production, they are from half-tone blocks.

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

Les Alpinistes Célèbres. Pp. 416, illus. Paris, 1956. Editions d'Art Lucien Mazeno.

THIS volume fully satisfies the dictionary's definition of monumental, 'massive in conception and execution.' More than seventy persons have contributed to the text and of the 221 illustrations many are full-page and some double-page. It is monumental, too, because, as Henry de Ségogne in his foreword explains, the *hommes célèbres* include none still living except for one or two 'whose reputation has given them undisputed pre-eminence'; and he suggests that any reader can make out his list of celebrated living climbers by a study of the huge number of famous climbs given at the end of the book.

We are given biographical sketches and portraits of men who have distinguished themselves in the various phases of the growth of mountaineering: the forerunners like Gesner, the scientific and literary like Saussure and Ramond de Carbonnière, and the first conquerors of the great peaks, Paccard and Balmat and the Meyers. These three sections occupy about one-tenth of the book. Daniel May has written a short introduction to each section. Most of the matter and the names are familiar to readers of Alpine history though not so many may be aware of such details as the extensive activities of Dr. Parrot. We shall agree with him in refusing to accept the ascent of the Canigou by Peter III of Aragon as authentic, but it is pleasant to find him accepting the *première* of the Bosses Ridge for the odd member of the Couttet family known as Moutelet. The portraits of Gesner and Saussure are very good; there is a rather charming drawing of Desor, and there is an engraving of Mont Blanc, and the Aiguilles du Midi and de Blaitière from the Couvercle in which neither of the Aiguilles is visible, but the Requin thoroughly justifies its name of Shark's Tooth. Forbes' ascent of the Jungfrau in 1841 receives small recognition in the remark: 'Il n'a pas fait de grand alpinisme.'

The two following sections cover the first ascents of nearly all the big peaks, the birth of 'Alpinisme, un nouvel aspect de l'Humanisme.' Jean Couzy is most generous in his recognition of the very predominant part played by British mountaineers led by Melchior Anderegg, Christian Almer and others. He gives satisfactory reasons why 'the grave, bearded gentlemen of the Victorian age' developed this new enthusiasm

for climbing the Alps. Among the excellent portraits of the men of this period there is a particularly striking one of Leslie Stephen, whose writing earns a full measure of praise, 'an admirable example of what can be looked for in mountains by "une riche sensibilité et un grand esprit".' Portraits of Tyndall and Coolidge bring out their combative qualities, and some of those familiar with Alpine Club history will question the statement that the latter is 'l'un des plus dignes représentants de l'alpinisme britannique.' Some small errors occur in this attempt to cover much ground. In the first paragraph on p. 46, Finsteraarhorn (1820) should be 1829, Pelvoux (1831) should be 1828, and the Nord End of Monte Rosa was not climbed till 1861.

Mme Micheline Morin, introducing the great guides of the period, pays a well-deserved tribute to their enterprise, their care for their employers and their modesty. There is much to be said for her claim that when a peak is climbed and christened it should bear the name of the man mainly responsible for reaching its summit, a Pointe Anderegg and Couloir Johann-Jaun rather than a Pointe Walker and Couloir Cordier. One or two corrections are needed; Bennen was not a native of the Zermatt Valley, and it was Passingham not Kennedy who made the first ascent of the West face of the Weisshorn. The portraits of Christian Almer and his wife after the golden wedding celebration on the Wetterhorn, and those of Melchior Anderegg and of Carrel and Pession are very good; so is the view of the Zinal Rothorn from the north.

Jean Couzy considers that the period when the interest and difficulty of a route became more important than the attainment of the summit began with the ascent of the East face of Monte Rosa by Imseng, Taylor and the Pendleburys in 1872; it is hard to see how the urge to make a route up from Macugnaga differed from that which led to the ascent of the Jungfrau from Wengernalp or the Brenva route from Courmayeur.

The founders of *l'Alpinisme Sportif* are also introduced by Mme Morin. Her point of view is shown in her opening sentence: 'Admittedly it is a fine thing to conquer Mont Blanc, the Verte, Monte Rosa; but would it not be still finer to climb these peaks by the direct ascent of a face, by interminable ridges broken up into great gaps and gendarmes like the teeth of a saw?' She echoes Mummery, whom she regards as dominating all this period, the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of this century. Empty space below, the void, is to them as essential a part of enjoyment as the silences in the music of Beethoven! The temptation to walk as near the edge as possible is certainly observable from a very early age; and it may help to keep us young, if we do not fall off. But it is comforting to the less daring among us to read that so fine a mountaineer as Franz Lochmatter could

not sleep after a particularly exposed and difficult climb, because he was always looking for something to put between his back and empty space.' And some of us find most pleasure in the portions of Beethoven that occur between the silences, though the latter have their use !

By the end of this period before the war of 1914-18, most of the greatest faces and finest arêtes had been climbed. One of its most interesting features is the close partnership between guide and amateur, between Burgener and Mummery or between Knubel and Young, where the two supplement each other perfectly. I can myself confirm that, when I once met Burgener in the Festi Hut, his voice broke when he spoke of his beloved 'Herr Mommerie.' The French have made a particular cult of Mummery, and this may account for the statement that 'Les grands individualistes qui constituèrent l'élite alpine jusque vers 1930 sont tous plus ou moins issus de lui.' Young and Knubel are among the few living climbers who are the subject of a biographical sketch. Alan de Chatellus, who writes it, is by his own admission one of those 'qui avons souvent jugé nécessaire de connaître l'extrême limite de nos possibilités.' (That *souvent* suggests to me great uncertainty about the purpose of life !) He considers that Young liked to succeed too easily, though he makes an exception for the South-west face of the Täschhorn, and that Guido Rey and still more Piacenza 'firent montre d'une volonté plus forte' when confronted by the final pitch of the Furggen Ridge. 'More sense and better judgement' might be a sounder view of the situation ; and this was also Mummery's view. In saying that after the tragic death of H. O. Jones and his young wife in 1912, Young 'revient à des courses plus faciles,' the writer must be forgetting the first ascent of the West ridge of the Gspaltenhorn in 1914. In his not easily recognisable portrait the 'vainqueur froid et sûr' is looking rather tired beside a triumphant Knubel. There are very good portraits of Burgener and Franz Lochmatter, and one of Tito Piazz that is a charming contrast with that of James Eccles exemplifying in a particularly urban atmosphere the 'type même de l'alpiniste victorienne vivant dans l'aisance.' Two fine photographs of opposite sides of the Verte both suggest as much risk as the most avid of excitement could desire, and the picture of the Aiguille Blanche and Peuterey Ridge is outstanding. The Col de Rochefort shown is, I presume, what we used to know as the Col des Grandes Jorasses.

Micheline Morin gives us a pleasing explanation for the development of guideless climbing, first in the Eastern Alps where von Barth, Zsigmondy, Lammer, and others pursued it with fervent enthusiasm. The example of Charles Pilkington and a few companions was not often followed by British climbers till near the end of the last century when Mummery, Val Fynn and their successors gave high respectability to the guideless. Guideless climbing, in spite of the early activities of

Victor and Pierre Puiseux, did not achieve popularity in France till after the war of 1914-18, when its great history began and the G.H.M. came to birth. I must add a personal word of gratitude to Mme Morin for attaching the epithet *suprême* to the solitary variety of guideless climbing!

The early exploration of ranges other than the Alps is also introduced by Mme Morin in a summary filled with detail. She seems to think the doubts of Graham's ascent of Kabru in 1883 are justified, though these arose mainly through the belief destroyed by numerous Himalayan parties that men could not climb without oxygen above 23,000 ft. Appreciative notices by Longstaff on Freshfield and by Aldo Bonacossa on the Duke of the Abruzzi pay tribute to the pioneering work of two great figures in mountaineering history.

The Final Conquest of the Alps earns a long introduction from Lucien Devies. The pictures of men on all but vertical ice and hanging below much more than vertical rocks fully bear out his conclusion that the era of the conquerors is ending and is being succeeded by that of the technicians. He ends with a question: 'How much longer will mountaineering be for men a means of self-revelation and of fulfilment of their being?' Some of us hope it will continue to be something exceedingly good, if not quite so centred on personal accomplishment. For those who regard mountaineering as a way of showing 'ce que l'homme est devenu capable de tirer de lui-même en haute montagne,' this period of the last forty-five years including two great wars may certainly be regarded as a *nouvel âge d'or*. Eiger and Walker are names that recall innumerable exploits '*incomparables, surhumains, presque inimaginables*,' epithets like these must stir pulses of the performers of these exploits who remain alive to read them. Of the fifteen celebrities chosen to be portrayed in this 'Ultime Conquête des Alpes,' no less than ten were killed climbing. Of the five who died from natural causes or in defence of their country, Smythe has a very sincere, understanding notice from Noyce and there are delightfully happy portraits and notices of J. A. Morin and Hans Lauper. It is good to read the latter's appreciation of the British view of mountaineering; acquaintance with more than one young British climber of today might have modified the lament that 'on sent avec lui que l'âge d'or de l'alpinisme a disparu à jamais.'

Women mountaineers are accorded only two pages of this volume, but there is a very pleasant reason for this in that the most notable performers are still alive. Henriette d'Angeville rightly gets a full-page picture; nine others have to share a page and a very interesting variety of face and dress they show. The presence beside one of them does help us to realise femininity in the earliest of women Himalayan climbers. Miss Gertrude Bell and the Misses Pigeon might have had

a mention in the introduction and my own experience of the woman climber will not let me admit that 'on lui dénie toute espèce de féminité' ! The ascent in 1955 of the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon by Nea Morin and her daughter confirms the conclusion that 'rien ne limite plus l'audace des femmes.' The difficulty of ensuring the accuracy of old climbing records is illustrated by a rather interesting case. The first ascent of the Vignemale, the highest of the French Pyrenees is awarded at the end of this book to 'Lady Lister and a friend with Cazeaux and Charles' on August 7, 1838, thus just snatching the honour of being '*la première alpiniste*' from Henriette d'Angeville. Charles Packe in Vol. I of the ALPINE JOURNAL gives the conquest of the Vignemale to the Prince de Moscowa, while Llewellyn Smith in *Through the High Pyrenees* says it 'was first ascended by an English lady with Cantouz of Argeles in 1834, next by the Prince de Moscowa with Cantouz in 1838.' Must the first woman alpinist remain nameless ?

'La Conquête des Montagnes du Globe' is dealt with in eighty pages of text and pictures of many mountains and of the parties who climbed or tried to climb them. The longing to make first ascents dominates the whole history of climbing ; it explains why almost the only French expedition to the Caucasus in 1933, that organised by Raymond Gaché, devoted its attention to some of the forty-six summits above 4,000 m. still unclimbed rather than to the grandest peaks. Though many names appear in the stories of the conquest of many peaks in many ranges, there are no biographical notices, the men who have accomplished the most notable performances in the Himalaya, Andes, and other distant ranges, being still alive. Approach and provisioning by aeroplane has made possible a visit in a few weeks to any of the most distant ranges, even in Alaska. Modern techniques including the use of 'pitons à explosion' have been eagerly adopted by American or other parties. The latest French exploits in the Andes are described by Nicole Leiniger and there is a very fine picture of the difficult side of Aconcagua. Odell gives us as much of the splendid growth of mountaineering in New Zealand as can be got into a few pages, and the picture of the icy precipices of Tasman indicates why the prowess of the local men on ice and snow has reached such a high standard. Jean Couzy tells how Russian names for peaks and climbers appear as well as those of Austrian, German, American and British, in his notice on the mountains of Asia other than the Himalaya. These last naturally occupy far the largest place in the book except the Alps. Most of the great expeditions are described by men who actually took part in them : Kamet and Nanda Devi (Shipton), Annapurna (Herzog), Everest (Hunt), K2 (Desio), Makalu (Franco). Desio, in a generous tribute to his predecessors calls the American expedition of 1938 'a

very fine bit of work, that explored three-quarters of the upper part of the mountain.' Hunt's contribution on Everest is the clear, modest, generous summary we should expect from his book; a curious slip I noticed was the omission of Norton's name from the climb of 27,000 ft. in 1922. The completely successful French ascent of Makalu by no fewer than nine climbers represents a triumph of what special equipment, careful preparation and great skill can do to overcome difficulties well above 8,000 m. Paul Bauer describes his two wonderful attempts on Kangchenjunga; probably material was lacking for more than a few lines on the great triumph of Evans' party in 1955. The account of Nanga Parbat, the grave of so many Austro-German climbers, contains a good many inaccuracies. It is incorrect to say of Mummery's small party in 1895 'ses compagnons dont plusieurs étaient malades n'étaient pas disposés à le suivre' after his gallant ascent with Ragobir to well over 6,000 m. on the Diamirai face, or that he then made 'de nouvelles tentatives; tous les assauts se brisaient contre le rocher abrupt ou la neige.' On the terrible too-long-delayed attempt to descend from the highest camp in 1934 we are told that Aschenbrenner and Schneider with three Sherpas left first and that the 'first group arrived at Camp IV that night.' Actually the three Sherpas were left to follow by themselves and only one survived when picked up two days later by other Sherpas. The route attempted by a German party in 1939 was not, as stated, 'the way tried by Mummery which cost him his life.'

In the Himalaya as elsewhere the attitude of mountaineers may be described as *tot homines tot sententiae*. While the highest summits are being attained by elaborately organised parties, there are others who seem to hold the view well expressed by Marcel Kurz in his introduction to this Himalayan section: 'Ceci est peut-être la plus intelligente et la plus satisfaisante de procéder: ne pas viser trop haut et rapporter plus qu'on n'avait escompté.'

Nearly a hundred pages are occupied by a comprehensive list of *courses célèbres*, a most gallant effort. I leave it to the reader to wonder why A's great climb has been left out and B's comparatively easy one put in among the thousands there. The same applies to the list of over 3,000 names of climbers mentioned and the 1,200 peaks, whose qualifications may be questioned. Lovers of the Bernina district will, no doubt, consider the Crast 'Agüzza slighted by omission. I believe the producers of the book have already received regrets for the omission of Percy Farrar from the noted climbers specially portrayed. Conway, too, by his exceptionally extensive activities in many ranges and his literary work, might well have been included. The diligent seeker will find numerous small errors in dates and spelling. These are inevitable in a first edition of an encyclopaedic work of this kind, which has

required an immense amount of collaboration and research, and particularly so in the case of a sport which has been developed in so many different countries. Americans and Russians may wonder that none of their national celebrities figure in the biographical sketches, but only if they forget that mountaineering is of more recent growth in their countries. Doubtless they will figure prominently in future editions. The producers are to be congratulated on the objective, liberal spirit in which they have tackled a most formidable task and on the extensive collaboration they have secured from so many men of varied nationality.

R. L. G. IRVING.

The Conquest of Mount McKinley. By Belmore Browne. Pp. 381, with 43 photographs in black and white. Foreword by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Introduction by Bradford Washburn. End papers by Erwin Raisz. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. 1956 (first edition 1913). Price \$6.00.

The Conquest of Mount McKinley is America's most important mountaineering book. First printed in 1913, it graphically describes the exploration of the highest mountain in North America and its ascent to within almost a stone's throw of the summit. One of its most fascinating features is the discussion of the mountaineering work by which Browne proved that Frederick A. Cook had *not* climbed Mt. McKinley. Cook's 'summit photograph' of the 'Top of the Continent' was shown to have been actually taken on a snow saddle at about 5,300 ft. ! Browne's proof of the fraudulent nature of Cook's claims concerning Mt. McKinley is important evidence in the controversy which occasionally still rages over whether or not Cook reached the North Pole before Peary—or even went anywhere near it.

Belmore Browne was America's most distinguished mountain artist and exploratory mountaineer. He dog-teamed and rafted in the Yukon, descended the Stikine River in a Tlinget war canoe and hunted whales and seals and bears with the Aleuts. *The Conquest of Mount McKinley* shows the personality of this great wilderness trader as he describes his greatest adventure. The foreword by Vilhjalmur Stefansson and the fine introduction by Bradford Washburn add to this attractive new edition of a 'classic' which has long been a collector's item. Do not miss the description of the great earthquake.

ROBERT H. BATES.

Aconcagua, South Face. By René Ferlet and Guy Poulet. Translated from the French by E. Noel Bowman. Pp. 209, with 18 photographs and 4 maps and diagrams. Constable, London. 1956. Price 25s.

READERS of the JOURNAL will already be familiar with the details of the French ascent of the South face of Aconcagua on February 14 to 25, 1954, through the account by the same authors which was published

in French in *A. J.* 60. 17-24. This account forms the basis of the present book, which is written in the same style, and has been admirably translated by Mr. Bowman. It is an important record by any standards of a climb which is not likely soon to be repeated.

There can be few more vivid contrasts in mountain terrain, between the easy disintegrating scree slopes of Aconcagua's Northern flank, and its precipitous glaciated Southern face, one of the great mountain walls of the world. To stand beneath this face and try to grasp the scale of its 9,000 ft. of ice-draped buttresses and hanging glaciers, is an unforgettable experience ; yet until very recently the Lower Horcones Valley, at the head of which it rises, was little visited despite its ease of access from Puente del Inca. The French climber Saint-Loup, in his book *Monts Pacifique*, was the first to suggest that the face might be climbed, but the somewhat devious route he recommended under the South-east ridge, pales before the magnificently direct attack up the central spur and hanging glaciers, which was chosen and achieved by the French expedition.

Having decided to make history by climbing a peak of nearly 23,000 ft., by the most difficult route, the party also decided on an all-out, no-return, assault from a series of bivouacs, when it became clear that neither time nor resources would allow success by the usual Himalayan tactics. It is the measure of the strength of this expedition that a strategy hitherto confined to Alpine North faces should have succeeded on the corresponding flank of a mountain having Aconcagua's altitude, weather conditions, and temperatures. Aconcagua is, however, unique in having permanent huts on its normal route at 6,200 and 6,600 m, and a mule track to about 6,725 m., which afford a 'walk-off' technically easier, if much longer, than that on the majority of great Alpine routes. But even with this assured descent, how close the party came to total disaster is clear from the published accounts, and from the condition in which all but one of the six members arrived at Plaza de Mulas, after four bivouacs in appalling conditions and temperatures as low as minus 35°.

The technical difficulty of the crucial passages of the climb (the rock towers below Camp II and the wall leading to the upper glacier) are well described in the book. The latter pitch involved some 50 ft. of artificial climbing on ice at 6,000 m., and later, just before their final bivouac, hands and feet were so frozen that a passage of 60 ft. required five hours of gruelling effort. Fortunately, the weather remained reasonably fair during the four nights they spent above Camp II, tormented by thirst almost as much as by frost-bite, calmly comparing their symptoms with those of Maurice Herzog, and substituting coramine for calories as their food and fuel ran out. The price paid was certainly a high one : all but Paragot suffered toe amputations after

several months in hospital at Mendoza, and Bérardini also lost some finger joints.

The leader of the expedition, M. René Ferlet (who was prevented by an acute attack of sciatica from accompanying the summit party), is to be congratulated for his part in organising, within the space of two years, two ascents as notable as those of FitzRoy and Aconcagua South face—the Andean equivalents, say, of the West face of the Dru and the Brenva ‘Pear.’ But whereas FitzRoy’s technical difficulties were met at Alpine altitudes, those on Aconcagua were at 20,000 ft. or more, possibly the first time such continuous severities have been overcome at such a height.

The photographs in this book are excellent; the enlargements of some of the sections of the route, placed in the context of the complete pictures of the face, give an impressive idea of its length and of the scale of the mountain.

T. CROMBIE.

Eye on Everest. By Charles Evans. Pp. 123. Dennis Dobson, London. 1955. Price 12s. 6d.

CHARLES EVANS’ sketchbook of the ‘Great Everest Expedition’ does many things for us. It shows in every word and drawing the perfectly balanced mind of the author. We had suspected him of possessing an exceptional level of sanity when he went off for a quiet holiday among his friends the hillmen, instead of joining the Victory Parade. Now he provides a mountaineering ‘just-so’ story, equal to the Master at his best, enriched by drawings in the economical Samivel tradition, yet more subtle in line and more gentle in their humour. His level is above the acid etchings of the satirist, and far above the slapstick facetiousness of some other works.

It is difficult to select any of the drawings for special mention though ‘Meat on the hoof at the Base Camp,’ and Changjup’s ‘Great contempt for common physical dangers’ rival the impression by the author, who should know, that ‘Coming down the couloir to the South Col was very easy.’

The best of the Everest books for everyone . . . the children to whom it is specially addressed; the members of this Club; and the vast amorphous mass of the Himalayan Supporters’ Club.

C. DOUGLAS MILNER.

Mont Blanc to Everest. By Gaston Rébuffat. Translated by G. J. Sutton. Pp. 158. 77 illustrations. Thames & Hudson, London. 1956. Price 35s.

THIS book is primarily a collection of photographs, mainly in monochrome with a few in colour. They are a very impressive group, and

the seventeen pictures by Rébuffat himself include some of the fiercest climbing shots imaginable. The quality of the gravure, printed abroad, is outstandingly good. It is only necessary to compare the plates of the Eigerwand with the same pictures as reproduced in *Starlight and Storm* to realise just how good it is.

The colour gravure is rather less successful than the monochrome. Compare the muddy Plate 69 with Gregory's lovely picture facing p. 157 of the *Ascent of Everest*. On another page the Géant is reversed from left to right and seen 'as in a glass darkly.' Among the smaller plates it is interesting to note a reproduction of the suppressed de Saussure print, withdrawn because the distinguished traveller was shown glissading in a style more convenient than elegant.

The short text, combining a little history with a lyrical essay on mountains, is relieved here and there by the author's recalling of some of his own achievements which he describes in detail in his other book.

The whole is ably translated by Geoffrey Sutton who is in tune with the author's outlook as well as his language.

But the total contribution of Rébuffat to this book is small. The majority of the photographs are by others . . . Bradford Washburn in Alaska ; Vittorio Sella ; Ghedina ; the French, German, and British Expedition photographers in the Himalaya. Yet the names of all these 'authors' are crowded into a small-type paragraph towards the end of the book.

And with Rébuffat's own superb record one may ask 'Why drag in Everest?' where he has not as yet been, and for which he has to rely on a few photographs, taken under tremendous handicaps, seriously over-enlarged, and looking very amateurish against much of the other Himalayan work.

C. DOUGLAS MILNER.

Commando Climber. By Mike Banks. Pp. vii, 240. Illus. J. M. Dent & Sons, London. 1955. 18s.

Commando Climber is a most unusual book, for it tells the story of a regular Marine officer who started and has continued his climbing as part of his life in the Marines. In a sense, therefore, it is the story of a climber who was a professional from the very first move which he made on rock : he was taught to climb, and in turn taught others, as a part of military training and it is this professional quality that gives the book its unusual interest for British mountaineers.

Nowadays, one does not, as in the past, avidly buy up every book on mountains produced by indulgent publishers. Climbing has become big business in the book trade and in consequence one has to choose one's reading carefully, glancing through the reviews in climbing journals to pick out a staple diet from the cocktail canapes presented

for the voracious appetite of the armchair mountaineer. This flood of books has left little that is new or exciting to record : perhaps this is welcome, for now a successful mountaineering book will have to depend for its success on its own merits rather than on the merits of the deeds it relates.

Banks has had many opportunities of climbing in every part of the British Isles and in many other countries of the world, but his mountaineering experiences are not new. What makes his book so interesting is that he has been able to do so much and to attain his high degree of competence, as part of his job. There is, in this second half of the twentieth century, no distinction between a professional and an amateur ; two words which belong to the mutilated social orders of the Victorians and Edwardians. Nowadays, there are only climbers : some climb for occasional recreation ; others are only properly living when they climb—escaping from the boredom of their jobs. Their only distinction is their degree of competence. *Commando Climber* is the episodic story of a full-time climber and one who seems to have enjoyed every minute of his time.

Mike Banks was a member of the British North Greenland Expedition of 1952–54 and it was during the immobility of an Arctic winter that he was able to write this book—a most acceptable result of the expedition.

C. W. BRASHER.

The Long Walk. By Slavomir Rawicz. Pp. 240, maps. Constable & Co., London. 1956. 15s.

ANYONE who was tempted to regard as unreasonable the protests made by Polish exiles against the ' B. and K.' visit to London this year, may find a corrective in the early chapters of this book by a Polish officer whose only offence was that his home was near the Russian border. After twelve months of solitary confinement and torture, followed by a farcical trial, he was condemned to twenty-five years' hard labour in Siberia. Then came a nightmare journey, by train, or handcuffed to a chain drawn by a lorry, through the Siberian winter till those who survived reached a camp in the neighbourhood of Yakutsk. What amazes the reader is that anyone should be left alive after the journey.

At Easter, 1941, Mr. Rawicz, with six companions—two Poles, a Lithuanian, a Latvian, a Yugoslav and an American—with help from the wife of the Camp Commandant (the only woman there and obviously desperately lonely and sympathetic to the prisoners around her), under cover of a snow-storm that hid their tracks, made their escape, after the usual preparations of saving food, making clothes and weapons, such as appear in most escape stories. They headed south, with Afghanistan as a vague destination, and at Lake Baikal encountered another escapist, a Polish girl of seventeen from a collective farm. One appreciates

the divided opinions about her : would chivalry demand their taking her with them, or would she be too great a handicap ? Chivalry won and the party proceeded across Mongolia, with Lhasa now as their declared objective. The name ' Gobi ' seems to have meant strangely little to them and they embarked upon a crossing of the desert with hardly any food and no water. The girl died first and in a moving passage we sense the desolation felt by her companions, whose finest instincts had been evoked by her relative weakness—they had carried her bodily for the last marches—as they stood by unable to help further. Two days later one of the men collapsed and, after a month of near-starvation, ' six dried-out travesties of men ' emerged into the province of Kansu and headed painfully for Tibet.

Once again we are left wondering how anyone survived at all. Men have sustained lack of food for longish periods, but want of water in a desert is a much more serious matter and Mr. Rawicz's account of this part of the journey inevitably raises misgivings.

Somewhere at this stage they should have crossed the roads leading to and from Urumchi, but no mention is made of them, though Sir Eric Teichman, Miss Cable, Mr. Tilman and others give one the impression that traffic is considerable and must have been noticed.

Tibet, for all its hardships, provided one regular ray of light, in the invariable hospitality of the Tibetans, however poor, to the strangers within their gates. The party were urged to make for Lhasa, but declined, fearing the lamas might not welcome them ; Herr Harrer or Monsieur André Guibaut could tell them that their fears were needless. But the idea of reaching India had now become an obsession and Mr. Rawicz dreaded lest a halt in a city might weaken the ' rigid, driving habit of movement ' which had kept them going. So the incredible journey proceeded, through all the rigours of a Tibetan winter, ravaged by scurvy and pitifully ill-equipped for crossing the mountain ranges that had to be negotiated. Another of the party died, but the remainder entered Sikkim (presumably) about March-April 1942. Here a novelty was provided by the appearance of two Abominable Snowmen, who are described somewhat minutely. One last disaster hit them, when the oldest of the Poles was lost over a precipice, and we share the bewilderment and the feeling of anti-climax that affected his companions : ' All this way,' said the American. ' All this way, to die so stupidly at the last.'

The route they took across Tibet is puzzling ; it seems evidently west of Lhasa and is so shown on the sketch map facing p. 240. The region would appear, indeed, to be that crossed and recrossed by Sir Henry Hayden in 1922 (*Sport and Travel in the Highlands of Tibet*, chaps. v-vii) ; it could hardly have been further west or their later wanderings would have landed them, not in India, but in Nepal.

After eight more foodless days they met a detachment of the Indian Army and their labours were at an end. The book closes with Mr. Rawicz embarking at Calcutta some months later, to join the Polish forces fighting with the Allies in the Middle East.

It is an intensely readable book, but it cannot be disguised that it has aroused doubts. Some of these should be easily dealt with; records of the Trade Agency in Yatung, for example, would presumably have some account of this destitute body of men, had they passed that way. Where were they in hospital in Calcutta? Which Indian Army unit encountered them?—it is said to have been on a motor road, so it was not in the Chumbi Valley. Confirmation on specific matters of this sort might go far to establish confidence in the main story.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Starlight and Storm. By Gaston Rébuffat. Pp. xxi, 122. Illus. Translated by Wilfrid Noyce and Sir John Hunt. J. M. Dent & Sons, London. 1956. 18s.

RÉBUFFAT'S book, *Etoiles et Tempêtes*, has already been reviewed in these pages ¹ and little remains but to commend the English edition to all readers who enjoy tales of mountain adventure. Apart from Rébuffat's gifts as a writer (gifts faithfully retained by the translators), what particularly strikes one is the contrast in outlook between Rébuffat and an older generation of mountaineers. The latter did not hesitate to rule out the possibility of climbing certain routes; Rébuffat never suggests the least doubt as to his ability to climb anywhere, thanks to modern piton technique, though a hint is thrown out (p. 38) that it might become absurd if one could only advance by hammering in pegs.

He well conveys to the reader his enthusiasm for his chosen profession: he enjoys all these tremendous North face climbs, despite some very unpleasant weather at times, and can even recall with pleasure how, on the descent from the Grandes Jorasses, he had to be rescued with a broken knee-cap, left foot and one rib. But the two bivouacs on Piz Badile tried even Rébuffat, as the picture on p. 49 shows, and we are left in no doubt about the formidable character of the Eigerwand.

A few corrections might be made in a later edition of the book: p. 1 might have included the names of H. O. Jones and Laurent Croux in connection with the East and West arêtes of the Grandes Jorasses (Croux is again omitted in note 1 on p. 4); p. 6, note 2—Lambert reached over 28,200 ft. on Everest, the highest point to that date; p. 86, Yuko, not Juko Maki, is the more usual spelling.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

¹ *A.J.* 59. 474.

East of Everest. By Sir Edmund Hillary and George Lowe. Pp. 70. Illustrations 48. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 1956. 21s.

THE New Zealand Expedition to the Barun Glacier has already been described in this JOURNAL² and elsewhere; the story is now given to us in greater detail by Hillary and Lowe. The former's account of the rescue of Mcfarlane from a crevasse is very vivid; hardly less so is his tale of his own mishaps, brought about by his efforts to help Mcfarlane.

Lowe, in addition to describing the ascent of Baruntse, gives a detailed account of the Dumji or harvest festival among the Sherpas.

The photographs are generally good, but too often spoiled by the woolliness of the reproduction.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

The Ascent of Rum Doodle. By W. E. Bowman. Pp. 141. Illustrations. Max Parrish & Co., London. 1956. 10s. 6d.

THIS is a rather laboured skit upon the planning and execution of a big Himalayan expedition; there are some neat hits in it which all can enjoy, and one remark by O. Totter—'when you are swinging helplessly at the end of a hundred-foot rope it is important to know that the man at the other end is a *friend*', is almost worthy of Kai Lung. But there is, generally, too much forced humour and the incessant conversations about the love-lives of the various members of the party are tedious, as is the constant dragging in of the cooking disabilities of the native Pong. The quaint, Victorian pictures are reminiscent of Frost's illustrations of Lewis Carroll's *Phantasmagoria* and other poems, and they strike one as weak; Samivel or Charles Evans would have done better.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

The Siege of Nanga Parbat, 1856-1953. By Paul Bauer. Pp. 211. Illustrations. Rupert Hart-Davis, London. 1956. (Translated by R. W. Rickmers, with a Preface by Sir John Hunt.)

THE German edition of this book has already been reviewed in these pages³ and it is not necessary to do more now than draw attention of English readers to this translation, and to the valuable Preface by Sir John Hunt. Paul Bauer is the man of all others best equipped to write a survey of the attempts on Nanga Parbat: taken as a whole, it is a story second to none in mountaineering literature. The only fault we have with the book is the lack of an Index, which, in view of the number of expeditions involved, is needed.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

² Vol. 60, p. 227.

³ A.J. 60. 181.

A Selection of some 900 British and Irish Mountain Tops. Compiled and arranged by W. M. Docharty. Pp. 124. Illustrations. Printed at the Darien Press, Edinburgh. 1954.

THIS book has been privately printed. The author wishes to make available to his friends the researches which have guided his extensive mountain rambles in the various ranges of these islands, and he has listed hundreds of mountains of less than 3,000 ft. in height, giving their map references and heights. A fine collection of panoramic photographs taken by the author is bound in at the end of the book, with full photographic and topographic details; two are Irish and the remainder are Scottish panoramas.

The introduction explains how the author came to compile the lists. He might with advantage have added a chapter or two describing in some detail a selection of the most interesting peaks of medium height. A few are familiar enough—Stac Polly and Suilven, for instance, which appear in the frontispiece, are little mountains of great character which most of us try to visit; but many are less well known. In the Lake District, Harter Fell, in Snowdonia, Cynicht, come to mind as lesser and remote peaks of great merit for a discerning Rambler. Without a commentary of this kind, the book remains something of a mountain Bradshaw, of interest mainly to those who believe in the 'Munro doctrine,' their ambition being to conquer everything they can find on a map of a given altitude, however remote it may be.

The edition is very limited and we are grateful to the author for presenting a copy to our Library.

H. R. C. CARR.

Visit to the Sherpas. By Jennifer Bourdillon. Collins, 16s.

THIS is not a mountaineering book but it is about a country of interest to all mountaineers and about the inhabitants of that country.

Mrs. Bourdillon accompanied her husband to Nepal and came back with him, but the many intervening weeks she spent alone among the Sherpas. She recounts her adventures with freshness and charm; even her unselfconsciously modest account cannot conceal the very considerable courage and enterprise shown in her travels.

Tents in the Clouds. By M. Jackson and E. Stark. Pp. 255; illus. Collins, London, 1956.

THIS is an account of a journey to the Jugal Himal in eastern Nepal (see *A.J.* 61, 60) which was highly successful and—more to the point—keenly enjoyed. In about a month the party traversed two glaciers, climbed to a col on the frontier ridge, and bagged a peak; which is more than this reviewer did in the four months spent in the Langtang before ever setting eyes on the Jugal Himal. As with many other Himalayan peaks the only difficulty of this one lay in the approach up the

ice-fall. Its height is elastic, the figure on one page of 22,000 ft. is later cut to 21,000 ft. But to go to the hitherto unvisited Jugal Himal was bold and enterprising and they had their reward in recapturing the freshness of bygone days, treading new ground and unravelling topographical puzzles.

Too much, perhaps, is made of the inaccuracy of the map, a matter of little interest to the general reader who will not understand it without a look at the map in question. Maps of the Nepal Himalaya do not pretend to accuracy (except for the major peaks) above glacier level, and although it would help hardy explorers who visit unknown regions to have a proper map, it is unusual unless the region happens to have been surveyed from the air. We meet with one or two 'perpendicular' ice couloirs, which is not quite the same thing as steep or even very steep; and on p. 143 a new doctrine of only 'roping upon all climbs when a fall would have proved fatal' is enunciated. Surely if one of their Sherpas had fallen and broken every bone in his body, they would hardly expect to be exonerated from blame on the grounds that the unfortunate man had not succumbed to his injuries?

Although Mrs. Jackson disclaims having considered the 'first-ever' aspect, her publishers do not—'their modest expedition made head-line news' runs their blurb. Must we now look for an endless repetition of Himalayan ascents by parties 'composed only of women'? And the bold conjecture in the book that 'the first woman to climb Everest will be small-boned and petite' seems to promise that we must.

The book, which is good value at 18s., is divided into two unequally written parts, but I found it all interesting and enjoyable. One part is in the run of the mill style of Himalayan climbing books, the other is fresh, racy, and has, what I thought, some charmingly written descriptive passages. There is a little too much about 'retiring behind boulders' and a strong Gaelic flavour pervades the whole. Brose is brewed daily at 5 A.M., while howffs and lochans abound. The Sherpas are well and amusingly drawn. They seem to have run the party with their usual efficiency, and to have got rather out of hand on the way back—which also is customary.

Some of the pictures are very fine, but it should always be remembered that mountains are more beautiful than those who climb them. 'Human interest' is all very well in mountain scenes, but the less intelligent readers who want a lot of it turn to the *National Geographical Magazine* which likes to decorate its mountain pictures with bebies of beauties in bikinis. The top picture facing p. 160 surely deserved a full plate, while that facing p. 176 should have been burnt. It reminded me of the 'Ascent of F6' and what the man saw when he reached the summit and died.

H. W. TILMAN.

L'Art de L'Alpinisme. By Pierre Allain. Pp. 218, illus. Amiot-Dumont, Paris, 1956.

THIS is an excellent book. It would be hard to imagine an authority more experienced, not only in Alpine climbing but also in the design and the functioning of Alpine climbing equipment than Pierre Allain. Those who know his *Alpinisme et Competition* will not be surprised to find, in addition, that Allain's writing itself is pleasing. A great variety of subjects is included within the book's 218 pages. For the most part they are dealt with briskly in a taut, sinewy prose, whilst subjects which are controversial, or which obviously interest the author particularly are covered at greater length. He has not been content in each section merely to describe one favoured technique or piece of equipment but, without burdening the book, has discussed all those that are current and valid. In this he is greatly helped by the illustrations of Jean Perard, of which there are no fewer than one hundred and forty-three. Allain is frequently able to cover a technique simply by reference to one of these excellent diagrams.

Logical and factual exposition of mountaineering technique is the avowed aim of the book, '*cet ouvrage succinct*' as Allain so justly describes it. Nowhere is a personal reminiscence, whether amusing, instructive or minatory, allowed to slip into the text. Obviously such things have been avoided on purpose, and the book is true to its avowed aim. The result is perhaps a little dry, and the book's precepts, with their *ex cathedra* overtones do not engage one's interest as much as they might if salted with even an occasional anecdote. Colin Kirkus' book *Let's Go Climbing* (which, for its day was as useful as is Allain's book today) went to the other extreme, fairly bubbling over with anecdotes, which did lighten its style and clarify its message.

L'Art de L'Alpinisme brings out the integral nature of climbing in France, or for that matter, in any country bordering the Alps. Any extra-Alpine climbing ground is thus an *école*, a necessary, but very restricted introduction to the bigger climbs to come, and hardly an end in itself. In our own climbing we are accustomed to stages of development; outcrops, our own mountains in summer, Scotland in winter, the Alps, the greater ranges, at any of which we feel entitled to pause or even finally to halt. Only the gap between the Alps and the greater ranges appears to have any consequence for French climbers. This general continuity in climbing development (as well as the extremely logical presentation of the author's ideas) puts a distinctively Gallic stamp on the book.

Gauloiserie, to our eyes at any rate, may also be apparent in some of the ropework, especially belaying. Whilst the 'indirect,' or body-cushioned belay, is given more attention in Allain's than in other continental texts it still seems treated as rather an unimportant and

specialised practice. Even allowing the normal arguments for a judicious use of the 'direct' belay on moderate Alpine rock the 'indirect' belay, when harder rock demands it, should be applied in the best available way. The diagrams (Figs. 120 and 121) show that in France the shoulder belay is not yet replaced by the waist or seat belays now tested, and in growing acceptance, in this country and America. Moreover, the rope takes a turn round the 'directing' arm and is held, backhand, in the 'controlling' hand (to use Tarbuck's terminology). The grip advocated by Tarbuck is certainly sounder mechanically, a consideration which should appeal to Allain, who constantly emphasises the advantage of using sound mechanical principles. In other ropework Allain's descriptions are comprehensive and vigorous. He obviously enjoys intricate rope manœuvres carried out with neatness, speed and understanding; he gives, for example, nine methods of crevasse rescue.

Two other details appear to me distinctively French. The first is the popularity of the harness (*baudrier*). These harnesses have been tried out in this country, but they have been found insufficiently manœuvrable in use. A leader cannot move his rope attachment round to the small of his back, out of the way of his legs. The second detail is a preference for plaited, rather than cable-laid nylon rope. According to his experience (for which the greatest respect is due) Allain believes that the plaited rope when new is slightly the weaker but that in wear it retains its strength better than the cable-laid rope. This notion is set down in graphical form as a curve for each rope type, having *résistance* as ordinate and *durée* as abscissa (Fig. 5). This is unfortunately no more than the presentation of a belief in the guise of an experimentally-determined fact.

These small differences between our ideas and those of our French friends add interest to the book without detracting from its value. It is one of the very few texts which has something for all climbers, however experienced, to discover, and to ponder. It deserves a place on the bookshelves of all who are interested in the soundest of the techniques by which the best Alpine climbs of the mid-twentieth century were achieved.

G. H. FRANCIS.

The Age of Mountaineering. By James Ramsey Ullman. With a chapter on British Mountains by W. H. Murray. London: Collins. 1956. P. 384. Price 30s.

FOURTEEN years have passed since the publication of Mr. Ullman's *High Conquest*, in which the author presented a lively narrative of the great climbs in the history of mountaineering. Meanwhile, much has happened, especially in the Himalaya, so that a new edition was to be expected. But instead of a new edition, one finds a book with a new title and the statement that it 'is based on the author's earlier book

High Conquest and continues the story of mountaineering through the post-war years and the climbing of Mount Everest.' There is new material, it is true, but a new title would have been more acceptable if the author had diligently revised his text instead of leaving such a large part of it unchanged. In reviewing the earlier book, in *A.J.* 53. 271-3, Mr. E. H. Stevens pointed out that it was 'marred by too many careless mistakes, many of them trivial, but all irritating, and some serious.' Most of these errors remain. Mallory's boyish face has to be sure, become 'lean' instead of 'round,' and de Saussure is no longer 'Henri' but properly 'Horace.' Yet Bourrit and Balmat are still confused and it is apparent that Ullman profited not at all from Stevens' careful and considerate review.

It is because Mr. Ullman's work is well written and because it undoubtedly reaches a very large audience outside mountaineering circles that reviewers within and for those circles are eager to see that it is as free from error as possible. But whether effective or not upon future editions of a book, reviews have a function to perform in putting readers on guard against misstatements. Mr. Stevens did not, of course, catalogue all the errors in *High Conquest*, nor could he be expected to deal as effectively with the chapters on North America as he did with the Alps. It remains for the present reviewer, therefore, to comment on these chapters, which are substantially the same in both books. The most serious errors occur in the chapter on Mount McKinley, 'The Great One,' as Mr. Ullman aptly calls it. Here the Sourdough Expedition of 1910 is completely misrepresented. It was not a 'haphazard exploit,' but a well-executed effort to accomplish a specific purpose. 'By every accepted standard,' says Ullman, 'they should not only have made a fiasco of their attempt, but all should have been killed five times over.' This is absurd: these men were Alaskans, prospectors and miners, who lived and worked near the mountain; they were inured to hardships and to cold; they were adequately provided with the kind of food and equipment they needed; and they were entirely competent to take care of themselves. It is too bad that Ullman could not have heard Charley McGonagall's (not 'McGonogol') account at first hand as I did a few years ago in Alaska. He would not then have said that McGonagall turned back 'near collapse.' 'There was nothing the matter with me at all,' Charley said, 'it just wasn't my turn to carry the flagpole any farther; it was Billy Taylor's turn. He and the Swede (Anderson) took it up to the top and I waited for them. Why should I go on when they didn't need any help?' There is a lot more to the story, and it is a much better one than Ullman's version. One thing I cannot forgive is Ullman's remark that 'in another week or so they were safe and sound in Billy McPhee's Fairbanks saloon, telling all about it to anyone who would buy them a drink.' That is objectionable

slander. There are many other errors in this chapter, but there is one in particular that needs attention before it becomes too deeply embedded to be eradicated. It is not alone Ullman's error; it has been widely repeated. Hudson Stuck has been given altogether too much credit for the first complete ascent of Mount McKinley. The actual leader on the mountain was Harry Karstens, ably supported by the Alaskan Walter Harper. Karstens was a full partner from the beginning and the expedition should properly be known as the Karstens-Stuck expedition. Let us hope that it will not take as long to set this matter right as it has taken to accord Paccard his due on Mont Blanc.

To return to the new material in the book. There is a rather curious addition, a chapter on British Mountains, by W. H. Murray. It appears to be a very creditable piece of work, but more suitable to the American edition, in which it is not included, than to the London edition whose readers are likely to find it superfluous. Just why Mr. Ullman did not feel himself competent to write a chapter on this subject does not appear.

The success on Everest was evidently the signal for producing this new edition. Author and publisher should have been content to rest with that memorable climax. Instead they have endeavoured to keep pace with subsequent events, with the result that they have stumbled in their haste. A few last minute scraps are thrown in which impair rather than enhance the value of the book. In two separate places there are 'flash' notices of the successful ascent of Kangchenjunga. In one of these (p. 227) the haste is so great that we find the leader to be one Charles *Hans*, a howler that will doubtless make this edition a collector's item.

FRANCIS P. FARQUHAR.

Montagna. By Bartolomeo Figari. Pp. 176. Tamari Editori, Bologna. 1956. THIS book is of some interest, describing, as it does, the author's climbs in the Apuan Alps, which are very little known to British mountaineers. This range has its centre round about Massa Carrara and runs up to join the Ligurian Alps.

Its characteristics appear to consist chiefly of great steepness and very broken and rotten rock; but the peaks are of no great height. The author, a most enthusiastic mountaineer, has been President of the Italian Alpine Club and also of the Sezione Ligure of the C.A.I.

The second half of the book consists principally of speeches by Signor Figari on notable occasions in the life of the C.A.I. and its Sezione Ligure. There are also obituaries of celebrated members, an appreciation of Quintino Sella, the founder of the C.A.I., and several articles referring to the ascent of K2 by the Italian expedition in 1954.

J. E. C. EATON.

MOUNTAINEERING JOURNALS

American Alpine Journal, 1955 (vol. ix, no. 2 (29)). The Californian expedition to Makalu, 1954, occupies pride of place in this issue ; the Americans, as is well known, chose the formidable South-east ridge and were unfortunate in selecting a bad season. They reached some 23,000 ft. and were confident the route was feasible to about 25,000 ft. W. W. Dunmire and Wm. Unsoeld, who describe the attempt, write good-humouredly of what was the first Himalayan expedition any of the party had made ; they were lucky to have Angtharkey as sirdar of porters and Dunmire says that a chapter on their march up to Base Camp might well be entitled, 'The Himalayan Education of Ten Americans by Their Patient Sherpas.'

L. N. Ortenburger deals with the American expedition to the Cordillera Blanca of Peru, in 1954 ; they climbed seven peaks, two of them first ascents, the most spectacular (one of many !) being Chopicalqui (20,998 ft.) of which they made the second ascent and of which they show two splendid photographs. No way was discovered of getting at Chacaraju.

Mt. McKinley takes up more space than any other mountain, with Morton S. Wood's account of the first traverse¹ and D. H. O. McLean's note on the first ascent of the North-west buttress (May 27, 1954). It is only fitting to find at the end of the journal Henry Hall's fine tribute to Belmore Browne, who had virtually made the first ascent of McKinley in 1912.

Cambridge Mountaineering, 1956. This year the C.U.M.C. celebrates its Jubilee and their journal contains a number of short commemorative articles, by G. Winthrop Young, L. A. Ellwood, G. A. Dummett and others. J. H. Longland writes persuasively about new standards of rock climbing, both to confound the critics of artificial methods and also to remind his contemporaries that they 'know too little about the past to which we owe so much.' P. R. Steele lets us realise how attractive a Pyrenean holiday can be, and nearly twenty pages of 'Climbing Notes,' both at home and abroad, show how far things have progressed since the 1890s when, says Winthrop Young, at Cambridge climbing did not exist as an activity and there was no talk of mountains.

The Canterbury Mountaineer, 1953-55 (vol. 6, nos. 23, 24). The remoteness of many of the climbs described in these journals will probably make reading something of a labour for those not intimately acquainted with the New Zealand Alps. Moreover, the articles are usually very brief, though factual, and this makes for a rather dry style.

¹ See *A.J.* 60. 367.

The photographs are generally excellent. That the Canterbury Mountaineering Club is active is shown by the 'Ascents Lists.' John Pascoe contributes a valuable survey of the Rakaia Valley and from the same writer comes a fine tribute to A. P. Harper.

Climbers' Club Journal, 1956 (vol. xi, no. 2 (81)). G. C. Band's diary on Kangchenjunga is graphic, though it tells us little not already described elsewhere. East Africa is represented in Caukwell's account of an ascent of Mount Kenya by the West face (with a tragic ending) and in McNaught-Davis's impressions of Ruwenzori. H. G. Nicol describes the ascent of the Grand Capucin by the East face, with T. D. Bourdillon; E. A. Wrangham a traverse of the Peuterey arête; and Alan Blackshaw the North sides of the Col du Pain de Sucre and of the Aiguille de Triolet, the latter a remarkable feat on excessively steep ice, climbed largely by moonlight.

The longest article, by J. Neill and others, deals with new routes, mostly in Snowdonia. The book-reviewing is often excellent and admirably forthright. But the Editor might well keep to standard spellings of such names as Kangchenjunga and Dyhrenfurth.

Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal, 1955 (vol. xvii, no. 11 (49)). S. R. Jackson's article on Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance, 1954, is the best item in this journal, but J. A. Jackson, 'Mountain Travel with the Snowman Expedition,' runs him close. E. M. Turner skilfully recaptures early memories of the Alps and the inspiration he derived from the mountains and there is a useful list of 'Climbs Old and New' made in the Lake District during 1954.

New Zealand Alpine Journal, June 1955 (vol. xvi, no. 42). The N.Z.A.C. Himalayan Expedition, 1955, is described by a team of writers, headed by Hillary, and occupies nearly fifty pages of very good reading. Norman Hardie and the late Colin Todd are particularly interesting in their accounts of explorations in the upper Barun basin; and Todd, shortly before his death, completed a short article, 'North East of Api,' which relates briefly the work, largely scientific, of the Oxford University West Nepal party, also in 1954. Despite monsoon conditions, three peaks over 20,000 ft. were climbed and considerable collections made of plants and insects, and much surveying carried out.

The New Zealand mountains described in this journal include well-known names like Tasman, Aspiring, Sefton, and Malte Brun, and a great many less familiar. The lists of Ascents and Explorations for the season of 1954-55 runs to fifteen pages.

Oxford Mountaineering (1956). After a surfeit of the Himalayas in other climbing journals, it is pleasant to be back in the Alps once more, with the O.U.M.C., whether in the company of B. A. Jillott on well-known

but never dull climbs round the Schönbiel hut, or of A. K. Rawlinson on the South-west ridge of the Aiguille du Fou. A welcome contribution is 'Early Days of the O.U.M.C.,' by K. Neville Irvine, which lifts the veil from the Minute Books of the Club, revealing tit-bits that assuredly have no parallel in the Alpine Club, such as that on March 1, 1925, 'in order to cut short a too intimate tête-à-tête between ex-pres. [H.R.C.] Carr and a young lady of more than usually [*sic*] personal attractions it was necessary to call for the minutes of the previous meeting.'

Sierra Club Bulletin, October, 1955 (vol. 40, no. 8). The 1954 expedition to Makalu² naturally holds first place in this journal, for the Sierra Club were the promoters of it. The other main article is also duplicated in the *A.A. J.*, being about the American party in Peru. Illustrations in American climbing journals are usually good and those reproduced here are no exception; but surely the picture facing p. 37 is of the East peak of Chacraraju, not of Chopicalqui?

Wayfarers' Journal, 1954 (no. 11). This number of the *Wayfarers' Journal* makes pleasant reading. M. F. W. Holland takes us to Spitzbergen, which is a welcome change; Charles Evans gives us a record of his and Bourdillon's great attempt on Everest direct from the South Col; but it may well be that for many readers Dennis Davis ('Days on Mont Blanc') and F. A. Smith ('Three Routes on Monte Rosa, Matterhorn and Täschhorn') will be the most acceptable items in the journal, since at least we know the mountains concerned, whereas few of us have been to Spitzbergen, and fewer still to the South summit of Everest.

Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, 1956 (vol. 26, no. 147). T. McKinnon describes the successful Kangchenjunga exploit of 1955, and Mrs. Monica Jackson and Miss Betty Stark the Scottish Women's Himalayan expedition; otherwise, this journal is almost wholly restricted to Scottish climbing. Nearly thirty pages are devoted to 'New Climbs' in various parts of Scotland, but the notes of members' activities abroad show that the S.M.C. is very much alive.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

La Montagne. JUNE, 1956. This number starts off with 'Retour vers les Alpes' by Ted Wrangham. Most young mountaineers are convinced that they and their friends climb better than their predecessors and have a truer understanding of mountains; such a conviction is healthy but its public expression is likely to excite controversy.

This Journal was, we believe, the first to acclaim the achievements of the Alpine Climbing Group, and properly so, but we cannot concede all the claims made for it by Mr. Wrangham. We agree wholeheartedly that the members of A.C.G. have given a valuable stimulus to

² Cp. *A.A. J.* reviewed above.

difficult climbing in the Alps by our compatriots ; modelled largely on G.H.M. it has had a similar and excellent effect. It is obvious that a post-war renaissance was needed after six or seven years' absence from the Alps, but this renaissance had in fact begun before the formation of A.C.G. added to its momentum. Nor were the war years wholly lost ; progress in climbing technique continued, assisted by Commando training and schools of mountain warfare, and given every help and encouragement by the A.C. and other Clubs.

For our part, while we recognise that there was in the 'thirties a real fascist risk to the spirit of mountaineering, we agree with Mr. Wrangham in regretting the misunderstanding and even hostility with which certain continental climbers, mainly Italian and German, were regarded by many British mountaineers during the inter-war period. But in his indignation at this narrowness Mr. Wrangham falls into the opposite error of misunderstanding mountaineers of older schools. The Alpine Valhalla has many mansions.

The lack of *élan* in the immediate post-war years is ascribed by Mr. Wrangham partly to paralysed contemplation of the past at home and partly to lamentable losses in climbing accidents in the Alps ; it is difficult to reconcile these two factors as simultaneously operating. It is right to give all honour to Tom Bourdillon and Cym Smith and to A.C.G., but the renaissance was under way before A.C.G. was formed, though most of its leaders then became members. It is in historical perspective that Mr. Wrangham is at fault. The world began for him with the C.U.M.C. of his own day ; a sympathetic and human, even an admirable, prejudice.

Apart from this historical astigmatism, Mr. Wrangham makes one silly statement : ' Zermatt n'attire plus que les débutants et les alpinistes âgés ou fatigués.' Everyone is entitled to his favourites, but it is poor praise of a beauty to denigrate her rivals. He will be an exceptional climber who can relegate climbing the West and North faces of the Weisshorn, the East and West faces of the Rothorn, the North and South faces of the Matterhorn, and the South face of the Täschhorn (for example) to his début or his dotage. Indeed many of the climbs rightly cited by Mr. Wrangham as feathers in the caps of A.C.G. are climbs in the Zermatt area, e.g. Santa Caterina, South face of Gabelhorn, North ridge of Dent Blanche, Macugnaga face of Monte Rosa.

It would be wrong for climbers of other generations or other schools to take offence at Mr. Wrangham's strictures. The article should be read as a spirited personal statement of a young man's fancy and not as considered history. Here is one of the many points of view that make up the Alpine climate of opinion.

The year's issues of "La Montagne" will be reviewed in our May issue.