

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the *Alpine Journal*

26th March, 1961.

SIR,

Chronique Himalayenne l'âge d'or 1940-1955

This volume by Marcel Kurz, published in 1959 by the Fondation Suisse pour Explorations Alpines, has perhaps attracted less attention in this country than it deserves. About one-third of it had, of course, already appeared in *Berge der Welt* (rather less in *The Mountain World*), but the remaining two-thirds are completely new, and here are a number of the more important features:

A critical account of the two Swiss Everest Expeditions of 1952; a detailed study of the successful British Everest Expedition; an original account of Larsen's secret attempt on the Tibetan side of Everest in 1951; the successful expedition to Nanga Parbat; the reconnaissance and ascent of Kangchenjunga, with the 1905 and 1955 routes compared; various attempts on Makalu including the successful expedition, with a sketch-map of the whole Barun Basin; a comparison of Tichy's and Lambert's expeditions to Cho Oyu, with personal notes by Jean Juge; the Japanese attempts on Manaslu, and the Swiss and Argentinians on Dhaulagiri; Roberts and Lorimer in the Dhaulagiri region; the explorations of the Api, Nampa, and Saipal regions of West Nepal; and, in the Karakoram, the expeditions to K2 together with a map of the upper Baltoro containing important alterations.

An appendix includes a photo by Joe Brown taken from near the summit of Kangchenjunga and a 1:100,000 map made by Bossart from it and marking all the summits between Kabru and Kangchenjunga. This is geographically interesting in showing that the $\frac{1}{4}$ in. map is incorrect and that the true summit of Kabru (7,353 m.) lies to the north of that climbed by Cooke in 1936, and is still unclimbed.

A 22-page index includes all geographical and personal names including those of the sherpas. Anyone contemplating an expedition to an unfamiliar Himalayan region will find this volume of immense practical value.

Yours etc.,

J. B. TYSON.

The Editor, *Alpine Journal*.

July 29th, 1961

DEAR SIR,

I am hoping to persuade a publisher to publish a book which will contain those writings of G. W. Young which have not yet appeared

in book form, a memoir by Mrs. G. W. Young, and an expanded version of the paper which I read to the Alpine Club and for this reason I am grateful to Messrs. A. K. Rawlinson and Wilfrid Noyce for their criticisms which will help me when I rewrite my original essay. Within the limits of a short essay it was obviously impossible to do more than discuss some aspects of a very versatile man.

Mr. Rawlinson mentions more in sorrow than in anger the fact that my paper contained 'plenty of Lunn as well as Young', but all criticism which is not a pure digest of objective facts inevitably reveals the critic's own views. There is 'plenty of Ruskin' in *The Stones of Venice*, 'plenty of Leslie Stephen' in his essay on *Wordsworth's Ethics* and 'plenty of Young' in his essay on *The Influence of Mountains upon the Development of Human Intelligence*. Of course if one is out of sympathy with a critic a little of him goes a very long way.

It is not, I hope, to the discredit of a non-combatant that he should feel a sense of inferiority when the flower of a nation's youth is being decimated in war. I certainly felt this sense of inferiority after being rejected for military service in the First World War.

It is a fact that the sentence I quoted from Young which referred to 'the squalor of these new fights' as if there was nothing but 'squalor' in resistance to Germany's war of conquest, and which implied that there was no longer 'glory in war' would have appealed to many, perhaps to most readers of the *Daily News* with its anti-military tradition. The contrast between this passage and later passages which Mr. Rawlinson refers to may be due to greater experience of the war and to the fact that, after ceasing to be a war correspondent, Young was not a mere spectator of a war in which, as I was careful to point out, he himself was twice decorated for valour.

Mr. Noyce, writing from a camp in the Himalaya, cannot be criticised for an inaccurate memory of what I wrote and of the points which I was trying to make. I did not, as he suggests, criticise Young because in his interpretation of mountain philosophy he refused to commit himself to theism, for I had gone out of my way to praise as 'one of the most moving and beautiful passages in mountain literature' the passage from the pen of an atheist describing the sense of desolation which is all that he could find in mountain scenery. It was not Young's views but his apparent reluctance to clarify them which I criticised. Mr. Noyce may, perhaps, be able to interpret the passage at the bottom of p. 109 in my article which conveys no meaning to me.

The letters to which I am replying might create the impression that my essay was, in the main, depreciatory of Young's writings. It certainly did not so strike Mrs. G. W. Young, though she found much in my criticism with which she disagreed. But the balance was surely very complimentary. I quoted and endorsed Knubel's view that Young

was the best amateur climber of the day and Sir Claude Elliott's tribute to his performance on Monte Rosa, after he had lost a leg, as 'the greatest physical feat he had ever witnessed', and I summed up my own admiration for his writing in two sentences: 'No writer has made a greater contribution than Young to mountain literature' and again 'The range of Young's mountain writings is unique'.

Surely Young's remarkable achievements both as mountaineer and writer deserve something better than uncritical panegyric.

May I conclude with something which has no relevance to the main theme of this letter with an expression of gratitude for an honour which gave me more pleasure than any recognition I have received in a long life, election as honorary member of the Alpine Club.

ARNOLD LUNN.

April 16th, 1961

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Buenos Aires (Suc. 16),
ARGENTINA.

DEAR SIR,

I recently had the opportunity of seeing the November 1960 number of the *Alpine Journal* and I do trust you will forgive me if I draw your attention to the following error:

On page 221, in the 'Expeditions' section, under the heading 'Yerupaja, Cordillera de Huayhuash', you state that Messrs. Vasalla and Vitale of the 1958 Argentine Expedition made the second ascent of this 6,634 metre summit. In actual fact this is not so, as the summit attained by Messrs. Vasalla and Vitale was the so-called 'South Summit', which is some three hundred metres lower than the principal summit, and is separated from it by a considerable length of difficult summit ridge. The American ascent of 1950 remains, therefore, the only true ascent of Yerupaja itself, to date.

Since no proper account of the Argentine expedition (which was actually a club expedition from the Club Andinista Mendoza) has appeared in any journal, I feel that the error in the *Alpine Journal* is no fault of your own. I am lucky enough to have played a minor part in the expedition myself and if I have made the above correction, it has only been for the sake of accuracy and does not in any way belittle the fine achievement of my friends from Mendoza, for whom this climb, in a type of terrain completely strange to them, was far harder than any of them had ever attempted before.

I am, Sir, Yours truly,

R. N. A. GALLOP.

To: The Editor, *The Alpine Journal*,

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