

REVIEWS

My Travels in Turkey. By Denis Cecil Hills. Pp. 252, illustrations, appendices, sketch-maps. George Allen & Unwin, 1964. Price 35s.

IN view of the growing vogue of Turkey for off-the-beaten-track climbing, Mr. Hills has chosen a good moment to publish this astringent account of his holiday wanderings during the years 1955 to 1962. For the would-be explorer, unbroken to the rigours of Anatolian travel, this book is an indispensable guide to the squalor and the hospitality, the 'splendour and the havoc', of the East. For this reviewer at least, and perhaps other *cognoscenti* too, Mr. Hills pungently evokes the smoky tang of *tezek* (dung fuel), the flabby taste of *yufka* (unleavened bread), nights on the *yayla* amid sheep-dung, thistles and the terrifying watchdogs, of a ferocity well calculated to alarm the innocent traveller as well as the wolves.

The author's travels carried him from the Aegean islands to the Kaçkar, or Little Caucasus, in the north-east, to the heavily restricted Hakkari mountains in the south-east, and included three ascents of Ararat, one solo. It is a pity that he never visited those most rewarding mountains—the Ala Dağ of Taurus. His mountaineering may not be up to the highest standards: he and his Turkish companion turned back from the last pitches on Reşko (4,170 m.), the highest point of the Hakkari, having light-heartedly left the rope behind in camp. But, as against this, he earns high praise for his capacity for long and uncomfortable journeys in the remoter parts of Turkey, and for his fortitude in dealing successfully with Kurds, marauding bears, suspicious gendarmes and all manner of biting and stinging insects. Yet, behind the squalor and the inefficiency, he has a deep love for the Turk, dour but hospitable, and an admiration for the devoted loyalty of officials and soldiers serving on a pittance in remote and hostile provinces. His Turkish companion's zeal in castigating his compatriots' failings included exhortations to Anatolian peasants to enjoy climbing as a sport!

Mr. Hills' ice-axe—carried in most improbable places since Turkey's glaciers are few and small—enabled him not only to drive off inquisitive crowds but also to pass as a geologist, thus avoiding to a large extent the customary accusation of being a spy. His warm-hearted hints on how to tackle the restricted zone problem are worth reading for their own sake. Other features of this delightful book include Ararat with an irresponsible journalist, the Kaçkar Tepeleri—the pinnacles rising to 3,650 m. and to be distinguished from the Kaçkar Dag (3,937 m.) which

is some miles to the south—in sunshine and not in the perpetual mist suffered by a recent party, and the hazard of numerous bears on the all-night descent from Reşko.

The forgotten literature of his nineteenth-century predecessors—Ainsworth, the Reverend Tozer, Bryce, Lynch, Burnaby, Canon Wigram and others—is noted in a bibliography and extensively quoted by Mr. Hills, who seems to have enjoyed ‘the digestion of an ostrich, the skin of a rhinoceros and the strength of a horse’, needed, according to the Reverend Tozer, for travel in Anatolia. The book is in the best tradition of the Alpine fathers—down to the sometimes irrelevant, but always fascinating, appendices on Georgian churches, the Nestorians, Turkish dress reform and Ararat’s other visitors—the botanist Tournefort, the natural philosopher Dr. Parrot, the cynic Bryce and the scientific Lynch. Tourism is encroaching on these unexplored corners of Turkey, but for many years to come the vastness of the land and the sparseness of its primitive inhabitants will defeat even the most enterprising agencies.

E. H. PECK

Les Montagnes de la Terre. By Roger Frison-Roche. Vol. 1; *Description générale des Montagnes.* Pp. 411, maps, illustrations. Flammarion, Paris. 1964.

NO MAN who wishes to remain sane reads an encyclopedia from cover to cover. He dips into it in search of items on which he requires information; or, if a reviewer, about which he fancies he has some knowledge. It was on this basis that your reviewer proceeded. He galloped through the pages looking for areas of which he knew nothing. Mongolian heights, Aleutian Islands teeth, Indonesian volcanoes, Dzungaria and the mysterious Tien Shan (where, as he expected, he found that the culminating peak Pobeda is visible from the large town of Aksu, where it has always been called Khan Tengri—a name now transferred northwards). When he wished to look up particular peaks or areas, your reviewer was infuriated by the absence of an index and an arrangement of contents that jinked madly. The Vosges, for instance, are on p. 35 mixed up with the U.K. (where there is no reference to Skye), Scandinavia and the Urals; the Pyrenees on p. 234 with the Atlas; and you do not reach the French Alps until p. 366. However, your reviewer struggled on gallantly, only to find to his alarm many errors of omission and commission. As one example of the former, in East Africa there is no mention of Meru and Elgon (both distinctive and distinguished mountains of over 14,000 ft.). More worrying were the mis-statements. There are, in fact, no gorillas on Mount Kenya; no chinchona bushes in Venezuela; no grizzlis (*sic*; correctly spelled elsewhere) on Minya Konka (but there are pandas near by). Lhasa has for some years, alas, not been the capital of the Dalai Lama; nor is Rakaposhi still unclimbed.

On top of that the author is a martyr to his proof-readers, who must have been as unilingual as himself. The highest mountain in Ethiopia, Ras Dashan, comes out unfortunately as Dachau. The river Kizil Uzun is Kiril in Persia, but Kizil Urmak is correct in Turkey a few pages further on. Gibraltar (*sic*) figures twice on a map. In the Rockies, Mount Geikie is twice Gelkie, and Laurier, in honour of a Prime Minister with a French name, is Kaurier. We find 'Goula Mandata'; Kangchenjunga was explored by 'Freshfiels' and climbed by our member, G. C. Brand; and Kabru attempted in 1884 by Graham Brown, on whose achievement in passing his hundredth birthday(!) all members of the A.C. will wish to congratulate him.

Heights vary—Everest from 8,888 m. down to 8,840, and there is no tribute to the 1924 expedition which reached a record height without oxygen and in what amounted to 'country walking' clothes. Three heights given in different places for Kilimanjaro are all incorrect and show no recent reading in English. Similarly for Kenya, the Ruwenzori and Ethiopia.

Even genders, those bugbears to us, go wrong in the French. The Satledj (Sutlej) is masculine and feminine on the same page. Your reviewer, having been beset by genders far too long, could not care less.

In dealing with the Pyrenees (if you can find them mixed up with North Africa) and the Alps, the author has a surer touch and his pleasant enthusiasm for all mountains leads us on to share his memories, his thoughts and his clear descriptions of regions he knows better. To the Alps he has devoted 125 of his 410 pages, but this is surely disproportionate, when one considers the prodigious length and uplift of other ranges.

This work is lavishly illustrated with photographs, many of the highest class and many well known (Sella's, for instance). It is regrettable that other, more recent, photographers have not been used for regions in which they specialised—our late member Arthur Firmin, for instance, on East Africa. In colour the insets, on a better paper, had been, repeat, had been remarkable photos. Your reviewer had always thought that the standard of British photo-printing was the lowest in Europe. He was wrong. It is a pity that such excellent pictures were not printed in Holland, Switzerland or Austria.

Even before opening it, one views an encyclopedia written by one hand with some foreboding. The simplest Children's Encyclopedia has many contributors. If limited to one subject such as mountains the task would perhaps be within the reach of someone versed in at least French, Italian, German and English (there is much in the *A. J.*) and with access to a large library of books and periodicals. In addition he would need collaborators with experience outside their own country and language. Such a superman would insist that his publisher provide an index and

references for further reading. His publisher might even suggest that the magnum opus appear *en fascicules*, paper backs which could be fitted into a binder provided to hold the sections.

The author has enthusiastically attempted a task beyond the reach of all but the rarest man. The result is disappointing and in places gravely misleading, perhaps most of all when we learn that to pronounce 'cwm' we must say 'cumb' as if sneezing.

D. L. B.

Il Gran Cervino. An anthology edited by Alfonso Bernardi. Pp. 320. Illustrations. Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna. 1963. Price L.5,800.

This anthology of the Matterhorn was published in celebration of the centenary of the Italian Alpine Club. Two short notices, on the name of the mountain ('Cervin o Servin?') and on its place in Italian cartography, are followed by extracts from the writings of some of those who have played a part in the history of the Matterhorn from the earliest days to the successes of 1962, with biographical notes by the editor.

British climbers had a notable share in these events and the accounts of the early explorations, attempts and ascents are mostly well known to us; Forbes, Tyndall, Kennedy, Mummery and others are all represented here. The first ascent is described in Whymper's letters to the secretary of the Italian Alpine Club and to the editor of *The Times*. The bibliography for the reader who wishes to learn more of the events of July 14, 1865, makes no mention of Frank Smythe's biography of Whymper, nor of 'Young' Peter Taugwalder's narrative, published in *A.J.* 61. 484, and the notes accompanying it, probably the most detailed examination of the accident yet published.

It is difficult to accept that Whymper was in fact responsible for the sketch attributed to him opposite p. 161, the position of 'Old' Peter being completely at variance with that described in *Scrambles*, where it is recorded that at the moment of the accident he was 'firmly planted and stood just beneath a large rock which he hugged with both arms'. The biographical information about British climbers is not in every case correct and the old myth that Whymper made the first ascent of the Pelvoux is once again revived.

The reader will turn with greater interest, perhaps, to the events of more recent times, the ascents of the North, East and South faces (the last two by Italian parties) and the attempts to force a direct route up the West face, finally achieved by Daguin and Otin in 1962.

The editor, in his introductory note, says that it would be possible to write about the Matterhorn *all'infinito*; there was not space for everything and so we find no record of the first winter ascents of the East and West faces and of the Zmutt ridge—but these were all achieved by non-Italian parties.

The full page coloured plates are many, and varied in subject; several of Whymper's sketches are reproduced, in addition to other illustrations which are not so familiar.

F.D.

Le Diable des Dolomites. By Tita Piaz. Translated into French and adapted by Felix Germain. Arthaud, Paris. 1963. NF 18.50.

BORN in 1879, killed in a bicycle accident in 1948, Tita Piaz was one of the greatest of Dolomite guides. He climbed, it seems, only in the Dolomites, but there he set new standards of achievement for his generation. His nickname came from the legend that he had sold his soul to the devil in return for a diabolical ointment which enabled his hands and feet to stick to holdless precipices. Although one of his most celebrated first ascents, the Guglia Edmondo de Amicis, involved a rope traverse from a neighbouring pinnacle, he disliked pitons and artificial aids generally, and it was as an exponent of free climbing that he excelled.

Piaz was no less a great guide than a great character, sturdily independent, no respecter of persons, treating them on their merits in the same way that he treated the vertical rocks on which he made his career. This book is the French translation of two volumes of reminiscences first published in Italian. Together they cover the whole of his life and record the personality as well as the achievements of a mighty man of the mountains.

A. K. RAWLINSON.

The Mountain World. 1962-63. English version edited by Malcolm Barnes. Pp. v, 239. Illustrations. George Allen & Unwin, London. 1964. 36s.

The Mountain World is an annual treat and the present volume, directed by Hans Richard Müller, in place of our old friend Marcel Kurz, is well up to standard. One drawback, however, in this volume, as in previous ones, is that some of the stories told are so long after the events that they are already adequately known to most readers. Thus, a repetition of the tale of climbing Ama Dablam, during the Himalayan Scientific Expedition of 1960-61, is hardly needed, since it has formed part of a number of articles in climbing and other journals, to say nothing of a book. Much the same goes for the first Indian attempt (1960) on Everest, especially as a second attempt was made, and has also been described, in 1962.

Fortunately, the stories are well worth reading again, and some may be less familiar to English readers. The German attempt on (1961) and ascent of (1962) Nanga Parbat by the Diamir flank has particular interest for British climbers, since Mummery made his attempt from this side, and the 1939 German Reconnaissance party would appear to have found a relic of one of Mummery's camp-sites. The 1939 party had had the good sense to abandon Mummery's particular route, and if they had read

Bruce's *Himalayan Wanderer* (p. 135) they would have known in advance that the route was exceptionally dangerous from ice avalanches of immense size. The 1961 party traced out a route to 23,000 ft., but prudently beat a retreat in face of bad weather. In 1962 prudence, or even common sense, seems to have been thrown to the winds; with over 3,000 ft. to climb, they made no provision for a possible bivouac, and took hardly any food. One man, Löw, seems to have undermined his condition by excess of 'pep' drugs; he became very weak, badly frost-bitten, and suffered from delirium. Yet, after a terrible night out at 26,510 ft., his companions allowed him to come down last, unroped, and he was eventually lost to sight. Seeing that the party was on Hermann Buhl's own mountain, they might have recalled what was the fate of that great climber, when foolishly descending a great peak unroped; it is not surprising that the luckless Löw fell, and, though rescued, he died on the mountain, and one of his companions lost all his toes, too.

Wolfgang Stefan's account of Distaghil Sar (1960) and Gerhard Lenser's 'Pumori' (1962) make good reading, as also does Samuel C. Silverstein's 'Mount McKinley from the South-east'. The latter follows the irritating habit of never mentioning the year in which the climb is made; nor is there any mention of Cassin's ascent of the year before (*A.J.* 68. 108). A concluding article lists the expeditions made in the Himalaya and Karakoram (including Pamirs and Hindu Kush) between 1960 and 1962.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

Guide to Rock Climbs in Uganda. Edited by D. Pasteur and H. A. Osmaston, for the Mountain Club of Uganda (P.O. Box 2927, Kampala). 1962 & 1963. Price 2s. 6d.

THIS little guide, roneoed in notebook form, fills a genuine need. The numerical system of grading is used, and this is related to the British and other systems in a simple table which forms part of the introduction. The climbs and routes of access are well and lucidly described; there are drawings of many of the rocks by various artists, those by D. C. Almond being of excellent quality. Only a few of the more important first ascents are recorded. Something has gone wrong with the binding of my copy which puts half the 1963 supplement before the main guide.

The guide does not give, nor does it pretend to give, all possible rock-climbs in Uganda. The country abounds in rocks—the majority are water-worn and seem to be of little real interest to the climber—and many promising areas are unmentioned. The objective is to indicate rocks and routes which are accessible from the main centres of population, and some of the more spectacular climbs elsewhere. Its importance is in the help it will give to Ugandans, several of whom are now taking to climbing with enthusiasm, and to Europeans who are in the country

for a short time only and have little opportunity to search out the rocks for themselves. Week-end rock climbing is now well established, thanks largely to the pioneer work of the two authors. And your reviewer, who led what was probably the first recorded rock climb on 100 ft. of immensely thick and heavy rope, hand-made from local bush fibres, cannot refrain from commenting on the progress which is indicated by the appearance of this little volume.

R. M. BERE.

Llanberis North. (Climbers' Club Guides to Wales, No. 4). By D. T. Roscoe. The Cloister Press, Ltd., Heaton Mersey. Revised edition, 1964.

THE revised edition differs only slightly from the edition of 1961. Three photographs are missing from the text, but there is now one on each side of the plastic cover, following the excellent example of the Clogwyn du'r Arddu guide. Added at the back is an appendix of later routes and a short section on the Snowdonia National Park, in which the climbing public is asked to cooperate with the farmer. The appendix contains details of a dozen climbs, among them Epitaph, the last great problem of the 1961 guide book. Other routes are Petite Fleur and Yellow Wall on Craig Ddu, Slime Wall on Clogwyn y Grochan, Old Holborn and the Castle on Carreg Wastad. In its new form the guide should prove even more popular than it did on first printing.

C. H. TAYLOR.

Cwm Idwal. (Climbers' Club Guides to Wales, No. 2). By A. J. J. Moulam. The Cloister Press, Ltd., Heaton Mersey. Revised edition, 1964.

THE new edition of Moulam's guide to Cwm Idwal, first published in 1958, is much improved externally by a plastic cover, with photographs on back and front, in the same style as that of other recent C.C. or A.C./A.C.G. guides. The old climbing descriptions have not needed much alteration, although one interesting point of detail is that the original route on Suicide Wall has been upgraded to 'Extreme'. Several appendices of general interest have been added, and the old diagrams have been discarded in favour of new ones by Brian Evans. The supplement of about a dozen new climbs done since 1958 includes a second route on Suicide Wall, other good routes on Clogwyn y Geifr and the upper cliff of Glyder Fawr, and some shorter ones on Clogwyn y Tarw.

'Clogwyn y Tarw'? This is the new style (the second in six years) of a cliff which was once familiar as 'The Gribin Facet'. Lovers of Wales will no doubt agree that it is right to retain the Welsh names sometimes discarded by popular usage; but I confess that I turned quickly from 'Clogwyn y Tarw' to see what we must now call the Idwal Slabs. Happily they still stand; and only a footnote shows that 'Rhiwiau y Caws' is correct.

A. D. M. COX.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Supplement to a Selection of some 900 British and Irish Mountain Tops, and a Selection of 1,000 Tops under 2,500 ft. By William McKnight Docharty. 2 vols. Illustrations, panoramas and maps. The Darien Press, Edinburgh, 1962. (Private circulation only.)

SINCE Mr. Docharty's original *Selection* appeared in 1954, he has continued as enthusiastic and indefatigable as ever, increasing his initial 900 summits under 3,000 ft., and adding in 1,000 of under 2,500 ft. Vol. I, the Prologue, with lists, is an extension of his earlier foreword; Vol. II, the Epilogue, includes a number of the author's own experiences in the hills.

The result is not only a notable guide for climbers in the mountains described, but a very readable narrative into the bargain. As a record of the author's achievement, whether estimated as a tribute to his devotion to the hills, or in terms of statistics, such as the 1,628 separate mountain tops he has reached, involving 1,954,000 ft. of ascent, these volumes are indeed remarkable.

Chronique Himalayenne II. Foundation Suisse pour Explorations Alpines. Zurich, 1963.

OWING to the regrettable ill-health of Marcel Kurz, this supplement to his valuable book covering the exploration of the Himalaya, 1940-55, has not had the advantage of his revision. The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research decided to issue the book as a tribute to M. Kurz and it forms a useful addition to the former great work.

The first part of the book deals with the Langtrang, Ganesh, and Jugal Himal, commencing with the 1949 Tilman expedition. Later chapters deal with the Annapurna group and with Everest and Lhotse. Perhaps the most valuable section of the whole work is the chronology of expeditions to the Himalaya, from Gerard's reputed ascent of Leo Pargial in 1818 to the end of 1957.