Taken from the Librarian's Shelf

CHARLES WARREN

Many years ago I was asked to review a little book by that great climber of the thirties, Colin Kirkus, called *Let's Go Climbing*. I remember to this day how much I was impressed by this most attractively written book.

But here it is in my hands again, off the library shelf; a charming period piece which, even today, gives young people the right motives for going climbing. There is something rather beautiful about the direct simplicity of the writing here which is admirably adapted to the purpose of the book.

Let's Go Climbing is written for the novice, and it is so good because Colin never deviates from his purpose of trying to enthuse his young readers with his own thoroughly healthy emotional response to climbing. Surely this is still one of the most readable little books on mountaineering for those of us who can still think back to the magical days of our youth in the hills. It contains some useful home-truths, too: how about this? 'Climbing is not a dangerous sport if you follow the rules. People who take risks are not considered heroes in the climbing world; they are considered fools and bad climbers.' A remark to be remembered, maybe, in these days of competition for mass-media publicity in the sport, with its attendant risks.

There is even a certain nostalgia about the illustrations in this book, which in the juvenile field remains a minor classic.

Kirkus, alas, died young, in the Second World War. Perhaps, in some ways, the book is almost more precious for this, because he could not spoil it by trying to bring it up-to-date.