

'May the events now occurring on the Eiger set no further lives in jeopardy, since these Munichers must have already paid the supreme penalty of folly and the strife for notoriety.'

[With which sentiments, while expressing sympathy for the relatives of the young victims, every British mountaineer will concur.—*Editor.*]

REVIEWS.

Climbing Days. By Dorothy Pilley (Mrs. I. A. Richards). Pp. 352; illustrated. London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd. 1935. Price 16s.

THIS book with its sixteen chapters and sixty-nine excellent photographs will appeal to all hill-walkers, rock-climbers, mountaineers and explorers of the uplands of the earth. It embraces every variety of mountain experience and covers a larger geographical area than, perhaps, any other book on mountaineering: to wit—Great Britain, the Alps, the Pyrenees, Corsica, the High Tatra, Canadian and American ranges, Japan and the Himalaya. The book is one which all of the fraternity will wish to possess and, when lent to the general reader, its appeal is such that the borrower may also become a buyer.

The first thing which anyone opening the book is likely to do, is to turn over the pages and have a look at the pictures. They have been chosen with expert help from very many sources. Many of them are of well-known mountains taken from unusual angles: many are of crevasses, corniches and other snow and ice formations, and are as good as they can be, while the photographs of human beings, male and female, dealing with seemingly impossible rock problems are as enticing as they are alarming. Some of the pictures are just happy valley views.

Turning to the text, the book is extremely well written, and though somewhere it is stated to have begun as a vehicle for the writer's thoughts, it is really vivid narrative from beginning to end. Any one who has climbed mountains makes the ascents with her: and, as already hinted, the fascination is conveyed to many who have never been among the mountains at all. Pleasantly interwoven with the narrative are the thoughts, criticisms and anecdotes of other climbs and climbers from the days of de Saussure to those of the Pinnacle Club and the Groupe de Haute Montagne.

The first hundred pages deal exclusively with British hills and rocks, Lakeland, Snowdonia and the Coolins. These the writer knows intimately, as she also knows the fraternity, male and female, who have *made* the beautiful thing that British rock-climbing is to-day; in its highest flights supremely difficult, but as safe as the best expert climbing of any *genre*, yet untarnished by 'ironmongery.' Purely Alpine readers may be excused if they skip a little here, but

every line is of interest to members of the many clubs who specialize in these districts. Anecdotes going back to the days of Wordsworth and Coleridge are recorded and, among other matter not directly related to actual climbing, there is a vivid description of the great bonfire on Scafell Pike on 'Peace Night' (July 19, 1919). A well-earned tribute is paid to Mr. Haskett-Smith, who, long before the days of rubbers, made the first ascents of the Napes Needle and of the 'Pinnacle of Pinnacles' alone, while many modern rock-climbers receive their share of praise.

Miss Pilley was one of the girl experts who wanted to show what could be done without male assistance, a movement resulting in the Pinnacle Club with its Journal and its hut on Snowdon. She was also a pioneer of expeditions 'sans hommes' in the Alps, where now the traverses of the Aiguille de Grépon and La Meije are examples of their competence. But though she has done a good deal of guideless climbing both before and since her marriage, many of the best expeditions have been made with her husband ('I. A. R.') and the celebrated guide, who seems to have won golden opinions both for his competence and geniality from all who know him—Joseph Georges, *le skieur*. One is glad to learn that he came by the sobriquet, not as a ski expert, but because, long before ski were known in the Arolla Valley he, as a young boy, saw a picture in an illustrated paper, and made himself a pair. The kindly and thoughtful action which brought Joseph Georges into their lives on the rocks of the Douves Blanches is happily described; and how fortunate was this meeting for all concerned is testified abundantly in the Alpine pages of the book.

Of the many great climbs which this trio have made in the Alps, the two traverses of the Dent Blanche (1) up by the Ferpèche ridge, and (2) their triumph, the first ascent of the N. arête, are among the most formidable. But on lesser mountains, the Bouquetins for instance, they had more alarming adventures, while on their descent of the Weisshorn by the *Schalligrat* they have to thank their guardian angels that Joseph Georges happened to have his weight on his left foot and not on his right when the vast crevasse swallowed its bridge.

It is needless to attempt a survey of the Alpine climbs recorded in this book: we must all of us read them for ourselves. Many and various they are, including a goodly number of new expeditions, which always have a special attraction for their initiators. Yet perhaps their ascent of the long ago scaled N. arête of the Grivola left impressions as vivid as any.

A brief note must suffice for the Easter holidays in Corsica and the Pyrenees. In both countries the party managed to do a good deal in spite of the immense quantity of deep snow encountered, which, however, in both ranges, seems to have provided unique sitting glissades, miles in length, and thousands of feet in height. Lucky they were in the Pyrenees to come across that famous old veteran François Salles, a great character, and, even in his cups,

a great guide. Without him, where would they have been? If asked why—consult the text.

The 'Wander-years' (1925–27) cover much ground. In the Himalaya the author was ill and not much was done in Japan, but in the American National Park and in Canada many fine expeditions are recorded. The narrative here, though sketchy, is always interesting, and enlivened by such incidents as the bear at Camp O'Hara—as alarming as the wild boar—and the ruffians who nearly captured them in Corsica.

Back to the Alps and, of course, to Arolla the 'enchanted region,' where we are ever sure of meeting Joseph Georges and the somewhat elusive 'I. A. R.' who, throughout the book, crops up and disappears from the narrative in the most engaging way. Adventures on many of the local peaks are narrated, and in the 'Great Year' (1928) there was the Dent Blanche N. arête and some glorious expeditions made in the Mont Blanc group.

When we have read through the book, we are sure to turn back and read bits again. Chapter VI ('Alpine Novitiate,' 1920) was a wonderful first season including the Charmoz, Grépon, Géant and the Dru—all except the Géant, traverses. But the fascination of this chapter lies largely in the 'tasting of ecstasy and weariness and discomfort that from the beginning to the end is the basic quality of Alpine experience.' The crowded hut, the uncomfortable inn, the start 'in the middle of the night.' And it is comforting to learn that the young ladies of the post-war period who, one has been told, 'float' without apparent effort up the steepest slabs, have suffered like the rest of us when out of training on snow slopes. 'Your face streams, and your temples pound, another step and you will lie down on the snow and die: a dogged perseverance forces you on. You count your steps, first in English and then in French.' Delightful reading. 'On the top both guides shook hands with us and said, "Good Morning" as though they had not seen us before.' An ancient and curious custom this which survives. When very many years ago the reviewer and his companion used to wonder at these strange rites, the companion of those days was wont to equally dumbfound the guides by producing a small flask and, as he passed it round, to remark, 'Now we will drink the health of the ladies.' Perhaps we cannot do better than stop here, coupling the toast with the name of the gifted authoress. And let us all make her a further compliment, more useful if less romantic—let us all *buy* the book; none will ever regret it.

C. W.

Where the Clouds can go: The Autobiography of Conrad Kain. Edited by J. Monroe Thornton. Pp. 456; illustrated. New York: The American Alpine Club. 1935. Price \$3.

THIS is a wholly delightful book. There is a refreshing hint of mystery in the very title, which enlists sympathy with the author from the start, a sympathy which deepens as the narrative proceeds.

It is based on the diary and notes of Conrad Kain, simply and efficiently translated and edited by Dr. Monroe Thorington, and owes its existence, as the introduction tells us, to the merest chance. Chance and Dr. Thorington deserve the gratitude of all who are interested in the acts and thoughts of great guides, who are also great personalities.

One such was Christian Klucker, whose autobiography was hailed as a masterpiece on its appearance four years ago. Conrad Kain, if less widely recognized in his life-time, has definitely won himself a place in the same select category. Klucker had the advantage of education and culture. Kain had little schooling. 'What a pity,' he wrote in 1912, 'that I had no opportunity for more education. It often seems to me that I ought to do something good and great for the world. I feel the little sparks in my brain, yet cannot fan them into flame. And now it is too late.' The lack, if it was a lack, was amply compensated by acute powers of observation and a lively sense of humour, heightened by travel in many lands. It is length and not lack of interest, that prevents the reader devouring his book at a sitting.

The first part (1902-1908) deals with his hard upbringing in Tyrol and his rapid development into a guide, who inspired sufficient confidence in his employers to be taken in his early 'twenties to Corsica, the Dolomites, the Pennines and Mt. Blanc. The story does not profess to be complete, but one would have liked to hear something of his initiation into mountain-craft by Daniel Inntaler, to which he himself does not even allude. He must have been a precocious pupil, for he was acting as a guide at the age of nineteen, without certificate but not without success. Throughout these early chapters we watch the emergence of those characteristics, which in later life stamped him as a guide of remarkable individuality. First and foremost among them is his intense and unusually articulate love of mountains, their shapes and colours, their clouds and birds and flowers, and particularly sunsets: he would linger on a summit to the last possible moment; the summit rest was to him the best reward of all for the fatigue of an ascent: hence his hatred of records, about which he has many scathing things to say. He loved first ascents and new country, but to hurry over them with unseeing eyes was to forfeit all the joy. Secondly, his moral honesty: he admits freely weaknesses, which he might just as easily have concealed, fear of dogs and of death, a slip checked by his Herr, neglect of duty, acceptance of help in a tight place, etc. Again his power to infuse confidence in man and even more in woman (naïvely explained on p. 418), and the puckish spirit, which could find something to laugh at in the most desperate situation; from this source bubbled the vintage of jest and anecdote which never ran dry.

The rest of the book is devoted to his life in Canada, first as guide to the A.C.C. and later as farmer, trapper and packer, with a brief

interlude in Siberia and longer ones in New Zealand. Here his own contributions are less, and the editor has done excellent work in filling up the gaps. The Canadian part is a record of hard and continual employment on camp and trail, interspersed with occasional excitements on mountains, such as his solitary first ascent of Mt. Whitehorn, undertaken as an antidote to boredom, and the notable conquests of Mt. Robson, Mt. Louis and Bugaboo Spire. Much as he revelled in their beauty, he found something lacking in the Rockies; what he missed was 'thrills and plenty of them' (p. 371). His own accounts of his climbs seem to me to lack the zest of his apprentice-years, but other pens supply the deficiency and reveal his versatile charm on the mountain and by the camp-fire: his racy humour is immortalised in such anecdotes as the splendid story of the Indian Bridle, the Italian and the beautiful Englishwoman, and Dynamiting a glacier. He himself sparkles more in his descriptions of his other activities, to which he applied himself in the off-season, especially his winter trapping expeditions, wherein his thirst for thrills was satisfied in full measure; one such thrill was the descent of an avalanche in company with the old goat he had been patiently stalking! Both survived the avalanche, but the goat was doomed to die for the hunter's supper. One can easily understand why men and women never tired of listening to his 'reminiscences and philosophy, which ranged all the way from snaring mice in Siberia to the intricate problems of true government.'

In the prime of his manhood he had three seasons in New Zealand. Here too he left the imprint of his vivid personality, an imprint by no means effaced after nearly twenty years. Some of his feats there, *e.g.* his new route up Mt. Sefton, and his Grand Traverse of Mt. Cook alone with Mrs. Thompson, earned him a reputation for recklessness, from which he cannot wholly be absolved. Throughout his career he seems to have been more willing than the average guide to take risks with his eyes open, and he himself records many narrow escapes where his own quick wits alone saved his party. Whatever was thought of his judgment, however, his courage, his indomitability and his supreme technical competence were never called in question. Though he was a naturalised British subject, national antipathies fanned by war-fever and inflamed by his irrepressible outspokenness led to his exclusion from the country in 1916. This was a sore point, but his supposition that the step was due to the jealousy of the guides at the Hermitage was, I have good reason to believe, without foundation.

A book compiled from such fragmentary sources might well lack cohesion and abound in errors. Thanks to careful editing, however, there is very little to criticise on this score. Apart from half a dozen trivial misprints, mistakes are remarkably few, and most of these seem due to a disinclination to tamper with Kain's own narrative. The year of the foundation of the A.C.C. should be

1906 (p. 213), Karangua and Unser Frik should be Karangarua and Unser Fritz (p. 337), 300-3500 should be 3000-3500 (p. 332). Mr. H. N. P. Sloman has been confused with his father Canon A. Sloman. Here and there Kain's memory has misled him, as when he states that he could see the ocean from near the Upper Hooker bivouac, and the south face of La Meije from the path to the Carrelet hut. The Corsican hedgehog (p. 117) is hard to swallow. 'I felt something cool and soft,' he says. 'I was surprised and jumped back. What was it? I had squashed a hedgehog, so that its flesh stuck to my fingers.' Is this a mistranslation, or one of those tall stories in which Kain delighted?

The illustrations, collected from many sources, are aptly chosen to depict Kain at various stages of his career and the scenes of his greatest triumphs. The very moderate price, \$3 post free, was made possible by the liberality of many members of the American Alpine Club and others.

Not the least interesting feature of the book is the frank revelation contained in it of Kain's attitude to his profession and his relations towards his employers and fellow-guides. It is seldom that such light is thrown on the 'subject of those discussions that rage whenever two or more guides are in conclave, and which cease uneasily on the approach of the complacent Herr.' As Klucker had his Anton von Rydzewsky to drive him wild, so Kain had his Mr. H. and Dr. B. Their identity is mercifully veiled in anonymity, but their failings from the guide's point of view are not spared. 'Dr. B. fell into the air at the overhang. I had the feeling that my last hour had come. I shouted to him that he should do something to help himself. I received the answer, "Just keep on pulling: what have I got you for anyhow?"' His well-known story 'The Millionaire Guide' is an amusing caricature of the Herr who pesters his guide with inept questions. On the whole, however, the story is one of mutual confidence and esteem, ripening, in many cases, into something much warmer. Here are some of the tributes paid to him as a man: 'Conrad improved every trail'—'That amazing artist'—'The dear little man'—'A brave natural gentleman charged with integrity'—'He hated graft, he loathed meanness, and pretentiousness was anathema to him'—'To have known him was to have seen Pan dancing in the woods.' No wonder that Dr. Thorington has done his best to 'hold in memory one who was indeed *der besten Führer einer*, with whom I spent some of life's happiest hours.' His view of his duty as a guide is summed up in his own words in four golden rules (p. 443). He set himself a high ideal, and a host of witnesses testify to his success in living up to it.

Many, perhaps most, mountaineering books after one reading repose unopened on the shelf, but I am confident that few copies of *Where the Clouds can go* will accumulate dust.

H. E. L. P.

Alpinismo. By R. Chabod and G. Gervasutti. Manual of the Italian Alpine Club, II. Pp. 258; 117 illustrations. Edited by the Headquarters of the C.A.I., Corso Umberto 4, Rome. Price 10L.

THE preface of this volume, written by General A. Manaresi, President of the C.A.I., gives in a few words the principal and most typical characteristics of the book, but it may be useful to point out the particular value of this recent publication by the Headquarters of the C.A.I.

The volume is the result of the personal and controlled experiences of two very fine mountaineers, both Italian Academicians, who have experienced and experimented with all they assert, in a short but intense Alpine career. The very few non-personal assertions are marked and specified; accordingly this new manual has the high and perhaps unique value of not being simply the exposition of an Alpine science, based in part on other people's experiences, but the fruit of personal experiences only.

The book begins with the last chapter of the well-known work by Mummery (*My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*) which might seem a contradiction to what we have said above, but this is not so, as the general ideas which Mummery expounds are fully accepted and shared, even to-day, by those interested in mountaineering. The book passes on to the actual treatment of matter in question, subdivided into three parts: equipment, rock technique, ice technique; arguments, which are treated with praiseworthy originality of judgment and clearness. It is a great pity that the chapter on the 'grading' of climbs (pp. 139-46) has been included. This sort of nonsense is best omitted from a serious book, as should be the part dealing with nailing of rock faces, since such methods have nothing in common with mountaineering. As well describe the engineering by which such mountains as the Gross Glockner, Zugspitze, etc., have been made 'safe for democracy.'

Chabod's concise, dry prose, not devoid of wit, and that of Gervasutti simple and clear are alternated in the various chapters without causing that lack of unity of conception and treatment which works written in collaboration sometimes present.

The authors have purposely left out all discussion to which the various questions treated offer much matter, also all the descriptive and scientific part, recorded in several other manuals of the same kind, in order to make this work respond as far as possible to a criterion of practicability and clearness, thus really attaining the object of creating that *medium technique* necessary and indispensable for would-be mountaineers.

The illustrations are mostly clear and decidedly original: more than a hundred sketches by Chabod, which from a technical point of view render the manual particularly attractive. Those illustrations purporting to represent modern crampon work (figs. 98-105) would, however, have been better omitted. So ludicrous are these that

they give the impression of being extracts from the work of that great humorist Samivel.

Dealing with the work as a whole, we have no hesitation in recommending it.

Le Terrain de Jeu de l'Europe, par Leslie Stephen. Traduction de Claire-Eliane Engel. Pp. 272, illustrated. Editions Victor Attinger, Paris, 1935. Price 30 fs.

LESLIE STEPHEN's great classic, *The Playground of Europe*, has had to wait more than sixty years for its translation into French. Mummery's book, *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*, was published in 1895, and an admirable translation by Maurice Pailion appeared only eight years later.¹ When it appeared there was a body of young French climbers ready to welcome it with fervour, and the hold that Mummery won on them is manifest in the writings of the founders of the G.H.M. When *The Playground of Europe* appeared in 1871 the French Alpine Club had not yet come into existence.

Time is a sure but slow revealer of the value of work. Regarded as records of achievement both books have suffered the partial eclipse that happens to all sporting records when they have been surpassed. As literature and as an eloquent apology for mountaineering Stephen's book will show its pre-eminence the further we move from it.

Designedly, or by good fortune, Mlle. Engel has so made her selection of what to omit and what to add, that with her translation and the cheap edition of the *Playground* in the 'Silver Library' series in 1904 we may possess everything published in the various English editions. She has omitted the chapters called 'The Old School' and 'The New School,' 'The Baths of Santa Caterina' and 'The Peaks of Primiero,' contained in the first edition and in the 1904 edition. She has put in the chapters on 'The Eastern Carpathians' and on 'Alpine Dangers' omitted in the 1904 edition, as well as those on 'The Col des Hirondelles,' 'Sunset on Mont Blanc' and 'The Alps in Winter,' which do not appear in the first edition.

There is an introduction of several pages, which to those who are already familiar with the rest of the matter in the book and who belong to the generation of Stephen's grandchildren will be of particular interest. It gives a short account of his life and activities and his chief ascents. Many who read it will never have heard of the interesting correspondence between Whymper and Stephen about the illustration of the Rothhorn climb, the only illustration in Mlle. Engel's translation beyond the portrait at the beginning; or of the effects of the gibe in the paper on that climb which led to Professor Tyndall's resignation from the Alpine Club; or even that Stephen was a clergyman for several years.

¹ A new edition is in course of preparation.

For Stephen mountaineering was a sport, and he and his special circle of friends show us that rivalry is a stimulus if not an essential condition of sport. Charles Mathews, in his obituary of Tyndall, tells us that the latter's ascent of the Weisshorn in 1861, attempted by Stephen in 1859 and by himself in 1860, was received by both of them 'with a certain pang.'

Like many men of great culture 'il haïssait la foule.' He wrote mainly to entertain a few friends with his own tastes and love of climbing. He judges mountains entirely by his own reactions to them. If Ruskin bade men regard mountains as 'the cathedrals of the earth,' he has the greater delight in describing the summit as the ideal place in which to smoke the pipe of perfect contentment. Tyndall's sacrifice of such precious moments of personal satisfaction to scientific truth is matter for ridicule. Mountains may have given both Ruskin and Tyndall a bigger vision than they ever gave Stephen, but Ruskin has certainly been proved wrong in suggesting that our respect for a peak must be lessened if we climb it, and Alpine summits are no longer regarded as specially favourable ground for scientific observations.

And yet, as Mlle. Engel rightly reminds us, Stephen 'n'envisagea pas seulement l'alpinisme comme un moyen de s'isoler de la foule.' The Alps are for him 'des puissances presque vivantes, capricieuses et terribles. Elles disposent de forces infinies et aiment à vaincre par trahison. Mais, dans un âge trop civilisé, trop scientifique, elles permettent à l'homme de donner toute la mesure de sa résistance physique et morale.'

There are occasions, too, when weak places appear in his armour of almost cynical reserve. 'Pour moi, la Wengern Alp est un lieu sacré, le saint des saints des sanctuaires de montagne; et les émotions qu'elle engendre en moi, lorsque aucun élément discordant n'est en vue et que les vieux souvenirs s'éveillent, adoucis par la tendresse triste du paysage, appartiennent aux sentiments les plus profonds que, même si j'en étais capable, je ne révélerai jamais.' And it is where he breaks away from his vision of the Jungfrau with the confession 'Mais je sombre dans la poésie' that we get our glimpse of the inner Stephen that has supplied the inspiration of the book.

Mlle. Engel has an exceptional knowledge of English and of English Alpine literature. The errors in the book are insignificant, though the way of translators can be hard. It is not fair to ask a Frenchman, still less a Frenchwoman, to translate 'My first performance was a brilliant hit to leg off Macdonald's bowling.' Few French readers will feel a qualm on finding 'Mon premier exploit consista à attraper brillamment à la jambe Macdonald qui servait,' and even a cricketer may find it a nice reply to body-line bowling. Perhaps this is even more hopeless: 'I have never caught a cricket-ball, and, on the contrary, have caught numerous crabs.' Mlle Engel, like a true mountaineer, traverses round an obstruction when it cannot be surmounted without artificial aids.

For the excellence of her work and its reception in France I cannot do better than quote from the review of the book in *La Montagne*, 'Il a sa place marquée d'avance, marquée depuis soixante ans, dans la bibliothèque du lecteur français. Nous devons à Mlle. C. E. Engel, qui, par ailleurs, a tant fait déjà pour diffuser en France la littérature alpine anglaise, de voir cette lancune aujourd'hui comblée. Sa traduction, pleine à la fois d'élégance et de fidélité, fait honneur à ses éminentes qualités d'érudite.'

Britons, as well as Frenchmen, may find a place for it on their shelves.

R. L. G. I.

Climbers' Guide. Bündner Alpen, IV Band. Bregaglia and Monte Disgrazia. 2nd Edition. By H. Rütter. Pp. 239, with numerous outline sketches. Published by the S.A.C., 1935. Price 6 fs.

NOTHING more characteristic of the growth and development of modern mountaineering can be found than this new edition of the 'Bernina, W. wing.' In 1910, when the first *Climbers' Guide* to the range was published, there was little or no information; in 1935, besides variations, there are now no fewer than 293 separate routes described. And yet this otherwise quite excellent work stops short, unfortunately, of the principal 'Italian' portion of the district, *i.e.* at the Bocchetta della Teggiola,² Passi del' Oro and di Cornarossa. Monte Disgrazia itself could not be omitted, but if so, why are the Ligoncio-Sasso-Manduin and Monte Gruf chains not included? The S.A.C. has not been guilty of this topographical blunder in its *Alpes Valaisannes*, neither has Marcel Kurz in his new *Mont Blanc*. It is these same wretched Italian frontier troubles that are the cause of this grave omission, and nothing proves better the utter futility of the League of Nations!

A review of the text is unnecessary. The author has long been the leading authority on the Swiss slope; he has as collaborators Walter Risch, Count Aldo Bonacossa and Professor Corti. Such a combination ensures a well-nigh perfect description of every route. If—to quote Marcel Kurz—evidence of a certain *fignolage* exists, this, as usual, is the work of those curious individuals who have visited the range solely for such purposes. The main new routes have been accomplished, as is but just, by the above-named distinguished mountaineers. A very few routes, *e.g.* Scioretta and its neighbourhood, had certainly been effected prior to those mentioned in the text, but such criticism is meticulous. The first ascent of Piz Badilet is yet again awarded to Count Lurani's party in 1893. This reiteration should for all time eliminate the preposterous 1904 claim. We know of one (at least) great, new route in the region still awaiting accomplishment: wisely, Herr Rütter makes no mention of what will be a performance in keeping with the gigantic walls of this glorious district.

² The information concerning the Pizzi dei Vanni is of great interest.

The sketches,³ although a great improvement on those of the first edition, are not up to the standard set by the Berne Section of the S.A.C. in its Oberland *Guides*. The bibliography is very small. In conclusion, the best thanks of all mountaineers are due to Herr Rütter on the splendid results of his protracted labours.

E. L. S.

Guide de la Chaîne du Mont Blanc. By Louis Kurz. 4th Edition. Pp. 501, many outline sketches. Paris: Payot et Cie, 1935. Price 10 *fs.* (Swiss).

FOR nine years the third edition of this little book has been the most compact *Climbers' Guide* to the Chain of Mont Blanc, and therefore the most useful for 'field' use. But during these years so many new routes have been made that the work had become out of date. In preparing this new edition, which is a quarter as large again as the previous one and contains many new and excellent diagrams, M. Marcel Kurz tells us that the labour involved has been far greater than that in the case of the third edition—no less than 978 routes, and a large *addenda* besides. He adds, indeed, that this is likely to be the last edition of the *Guide*, because the climbs, useful or the reverse, in the Chain of Mont Blanc will not again be capable of compression into a single volume. Our future loss is shown by the excellence of the present issue, which follows the example of its predecessors in combining short historical notes with practical (but not too minute) descriptions of the climbs. These, the clearly drawn diagrams, and the comprehensiveness of the information, more than maintain the standard set in previous editions; while the compactness of the book makes it the most useful *Climbers' Guide* for carrying on expeditions in the Mont Blanc range as a whole.

The very large bibliography is especially of the utmost value.

T. G. B.

Nanga Parbat Adventure. A Himalayan Expedition. By Fritz Bechtold. Translated by H. E. G. Tyndale. Pp. 93, with 114 illustrations and 3 line-maps. London: John Murray, 1935. Price 10s. 6d.

Deutsche am Nanga Parbat was fully reviewed in the last number of our JOURNAL (47, 166) and repetition is pointless. Yet Mr. Tyndale's welcome translation necessitates notice in our pages, for this expedition, despite its tragic ending, must always stand out as one of the greatest of Himalayan epics. Mr. Tyndale with true artistry has left it a German book: mountaineers of all nations hold many outlooks in common, but differences of approach have their own value and should be rendered as they are.

In the translator's brief preface are two memorable passages: 'the secret of successful leadership is the power to inspire confidence in others,' an allusion to Merkl; then, quoting Merkl, 'the decisive factor in the Himalaya is above all the co-operation of men like-

³ I am not sure that the position of the Trubinasca Pass is correctly marked on the sketches, pp. 212 and 230. The pass should lie to the right, *W.*, of the tooth.

minded, together with that community of labour which devotes itself not to personal ambition but to the great task in hand.' We could have done with a little more from the pen of a man who so clearly understands the problems with which this terribly stark book deals. Mr. Tyndale has also added a useful index. The volume is excellently printed, with pleasantly wide margins, the pages being large enough to carry the photographs with their titles, thus avoiding the annoyance of reference to another page for information. These illustrations have certainly never been surpassed, either in quality or subject, in any book on mountaineering and are better reproduced than in any similar British publication known to the writer. The name of the member of the party who took each photograph is printed on the plate: this should be a universal practice, but the actual date of the exposure should also always be added. The value of photographs to the mountaineer is greatly enhanced by full documentation, which likewise increases the worth of the text itself.

Herr Bechtold gives small scope for pinpricks; but we must do our best. The phrase 'the province of Lhasa and Sikkim' (p. 8) is a confused expression of the politico-geographical facts: 'provinces' would have passed the censor! The use of the word 'Hindu' (p. 21) in reference to the Astor people cannot be justified, not even if all natives of India are claimed as being Aryan. The application of the label 'Kailas range' (p. 26) to the Karakoram has been wisely dropped by the best authorities. The head illustrated on Plate 24 is that of an ibex and not of an arial, which is a sheep. Not much of a list. Indeed it is very unusual to find so few and unimportant slips in a book on the Himalaya, so vastly complex in every aspect. Herr Bechtold tells his story with transparent sincerity, simplicity and modesty.

The realistic account of the crossing of the Burzil Pass (p. 19) indicates the degree of hardship unavoidably inflicted on local villagers needed for transport during the earliest stages of these big expeditions. This is not a criticism of this expedition: it implies no reflection whatever on their treatment of their grand Mongolian porters, nor of their Baltis at the lower camps on the mountain. We see Bechtold sacrificing his own chances of the summit by escorting down two broken porters, exactly as Longland did on the last Everest expedition. Merkl, the great leader, dies in the rearguard. Bernard, the enduring doctor, warns his companions to turn back before they crack (p. 61). The whole story is one of united effort and self-sacrifice for a common objective. Every mountaineer should read this book. He will perceive that tragic catastrophe is always just as close to the adventurer on high mountains as it is amongst the ice and snow of the poles.

All mountaineers will unite in wishing a future German expedition to Nanga Parbat complete success unmarred by accident.

T. G. L.