

name of the "John Muir of Japan" to whom the book was dedicated: Farquhar's translator makes it Ojima Torimizu; mine, Usui Kojima. You can take your pick. At any rate, these volumes with Kinoshita's *The National Parks of the United States* make an interesting addition to books about the mountains of the American West.

Farquhar is an authority on the exploration and climbing records of our Western mountains and probably the foremost historian of the Sierra Nevada. Therefore, one is puzzled at one point to find this meticulous chronicler using a vague supposition when a pertinent and interesting historical fact was available. On page 62 he writes, "Although Walker's party, in 1833, had undoubtedly looked into Yosemite Valley from the rim above, and *more than one prospector in 1849 or 1850 had had a glimpse of it from some point of vantage*, the effective discovery dates from March, 1851 . . ." (italics mine). Whether prospectors saw Yosemite or not is conjectural, but a diary was discovered several years ago, written by an itinerant millwright named William Penn Abrams, which accurately describes an accidental visit to the valley on 18 October 1849. A notice of this diary appeared in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* for May 1947. Although judged by everyone who has seen it to be authentic, there seems to be some reluctance to include this interesting old journal, with the second recorded account of the valley, in the documented history of Yosemite.

As usual, the University of California Press has turned out a beautiful book and the nine illustrations—reproductions of title pages and portraits of authors—are excellent. We look forward to more volumes by Francis Farquhar on the history and lore of the Sierra Nevada, but we do entertain a faint hope that they may be produced at a slightly lower cost.

WELDON F. HEALD

Les Montagnes du Monde. Publié par la Fondation Suisse pour l'Exploration Alpine, Zürich. Lausanne: F. Rouge et Cie. Vol. I, 1946. Vol. II, 1947. Also, an edition in German, *Berge der Welt*. The institute which puts out these volumes has for its purpose sending out or assisting mountain expeditions. As part of its program it is publishing this mountain yearbook, intended to report not only on its own work, but also on important climbs and mountain

studies performed by anyone anywhere. Volume I (254 pages, 40 plates) was edited by André Roch. Volume II (239 pages, 56 plates) gives no editor's name. Among the corresponding editors are our members Mrs. Wade Martin and Bradford Washburn. The volumes are attractively printed and bound, and the illustrations, particularly in the 1947 annual, are superb.

The 1946 annual, doubtless because of lack of material from the rest of the world at that time, devotes 150-odd pages to the Alps. It includes also an account of a 1929 Caucasus expedition; a scientific article on avalanches and one on altitude physiology; some pages of notes and news; and Part One of an essay by Marcel Kurz on the chronology of altitude records attained by men on foot, from the classical period to the present. This very interesting study seems to be the result of enormous research. For the earlier ascents the evidence is analyzed, and for the later the published accounts are abstracted. According to Kurz the first 7000-metre summit to be reached was Shilla, in 1860. It is interesting to note that 68 years later the highest peak yet attained was only 102 metres higher, Pk. Lenin. Of course, long before that men had reached greater altitudes on mountains they failed to conquer. It would have been helpful if a bibliography could have been appended. One would like to read more about some of these ascents; but, as no references are given, to do so would, in many cases, mean a long hunt.

In the 1947 annual a full account of the Swiss Himalaya expedition of 1947 occupies about a third of the volume. This group made some fine first ascents, notably Kedarnath, Satopanth and Nanda Ghunti. Another third is taken up by the concluding part of the Kurz chronology of ascents and by a summary, also by Kurz, of Himalayan climbing, 1939-46. This includes a rather full account of the second American K2 expedition. The remaining third is occupied by brief notes on climbs in various ranges and miscellaneous news.

There is room for a review of mountain activities, either annual or more frequent, which is not the organ of a climbing club, and is international in its outlook. It is not yet clear whether this publication is going to fill the bill. These two volumes deal almost entirely with the Alps and the Himalaya, and the writers are mostly Swiss. Probably the difficulties of any beginning, and of these unfavorable

times, may be the cause of this limitation. The list of articles planned for the 1949 annual shows a wider range. These are very interesting volumes. There is every indication of a serious effort toward a high standard. The present reviewer makes no attempt to assess the quality of the work, or the accuracy of the statements. He merely reports that those articles which he read he liked.

NATHANIEL L. GOODRICH

Alpine Tragedy, by Charles Gos. Translated from the French by Malcolm Barnes. 282 pages, illustrations. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. Price, \$6.00.

Malcolm Barnes' spirited translation of Charles Gos' story of fatal mountain climbing accidents in the Alps is strangely fascinating. Though the accidents are very real, there is nothing macabre about the story of 24 separate disasters, many of them well known to climbers for three-quarters of a century and covering the period from Dr. Hamel to Alexander Burgener. The author's exhaustive research, shown by numerous footnotes, does not affect his piquant style.

Though some readers may object to the imaginary conversations of the main characters, to me these seem justified by the color and reality which they bring to the individual narratives. The stories emphasize what can happen even to the finest climbers through lack of technique, carelessness, or mischance. The misadventures have been selected from a great number and are varied. For instance, there is the death of the Knubel brothers in a fall through a cornice on the Lyskamm, the fate of unroped Julius Elliott on the Schreckhorn, the strange disappearance of the Count of Villanova on Mont Blanc, and the sensational adventure of courageous F. W. Hill on the Dent Blanche after his companions had fallen.

I know of no other book which, with similar thoroughness, restraint and absence of moral reflections, treats so effectively these famous and sobering misadventures. It is sad to have to add that Charles Gos died at Martigny on 14 April 1949.

R. H. BATES

Henriette d'Angeville au Mont-Blanc, by Émile Gaillard. 159 pp., numerous illustrations. Chambéry, 1947: Collection le Roc et l'Eau, Éditions Lire.