

There was only one thing to be done, and I exercised the only persuasion I could think of. He gave one bound and rushed away as hard as he could go, exactly like a cat when from a window you hurl a basin of water upon it . . .

R. P. BRUNDAGE

*This My Voyage*, by Tom Longstaff. 324 pages, with 23 illustrations and 14 sketch maps. London: John Murray, 1950. Price, 21/-.

This remarkable book of adventuring is the autobiography of a recent past-president of the Alpine Club who is still going strong in his 76th year. At the age of 15 he declared that his ambition was mountain travel. His father wisely advised him to take a medical degree first, and Dr. Longstaff has served since then in two World Wars. He has also climbed in practically all the major ranges of the world—Alps, Caucasus, Himalaya, Rockies, Selkirks—as well as in Greenland and Spitsbergen. He took part in expeditions to Tibet in 1908, Spitsbergen in 1921, Mt. Everest in 1922. He visited Spitsbergen again in 1923 and the Garhwal Himalaya in 1927. He led the Oxford University expedition to Greenland in 1928. In 1907 he ascended Trisul, and two years later he explored the Siachen Glacier and discovered Teram Kangri. He was the first to see into the inner sanctuary of Nanda Devi. He was awarded the Gill Memorial by the Royal Geographical Society in 1908 and the Founder's Medal in 1928.

For this reviewer, some of Dr. Longstaff's remarks on Canadian mountaineering have special interest:

There is no lack of beauty. The individual scale of these mountains is so small—though their extent is vast—that flowing waters, forest, glacier and peak can be seen in one harmony: a form of composition completely lacking in the Himalaya. There is nothing more beautiful in any mountain scene, but its menace is inescapable. The secret may lie in the density of the forests and their pathlessness: here is no reassurance of ancient tracks, no passes crossed by generations of caravans. The mountains of Europe and Asia recall gods and dryads and the long procession of man. These empty wilds are peopled only by our bare imagination, apt to primitive terror: there is no past except starvation.

How strange is this point of view to others who have climbed in Canada, feeling the peaks friendly and thinking, however ignorantly, that the Himalaya might terrify! It is surprising also that the author considers his most difficult climb to have been Mt. As-

siniboine—although, to be sure, his route by the N.W. face (1910) has never been repeated. The lapse of time has once betrayed his memory. He says (p. 221) that he broke a finger while he was ascending a new peak with Oliver Wheeler during a crossing of Abbot Pass. In reality, this happened on Chimney Peak, attained from Consolation Pass (*C.A.J.*, III, 78).

J. MONROE THORINGTON

*Postscript to Adventure*, by Lord Schuster. 214 pages and 12 illustrations, including 3 sketches by H. G. Willink, with an introduction by Arnold Lunn. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950. It is said that the late C. Myles Mathews once wished to possess an Alpine library: "I began with *The Playground of Europe*, and tried each succeeding volume by its standard. My library remained a collection of one volume. It is so no longer. Mr. Schuster's book [*Peaks and Pleasant Pastures*] has joined it on the shelf." Lord Schuster, like Dr. Longstaff a past-president of the Alpine Club, is a master of style; and his new book is scarcely less enjoyable than what he has written in earlier years. It is, however, largely a collection of papers read before mountaineering clubs; and, when the author has made a good point in one talk, he is naturally inclined to repeat it in the next.

We enjoyed particularly the chapter on the Meije, and rejoiced on finding the noble valedictory read by the author on the occasion of his retirement from the presidency of the A.C. There is a long and fascinating section on John Tyndall as a mountaineer, and there is a clever duel with Arnold Lunn over the matter of mysticism:

To say that there can be mystical communion between a mountain and a man is therefore nonsense. A mountain is a portion of the earth's surface which, as a result of natural processes, stands higher than other portions. If it has a "shadowy personality" it is because we "attribute" such personality to it. And you cannot have a mystic communion with a lump of rock and ice; it has no spirit, no love, no compassion. And nothing which we do or say, or think or feel can endow it with these attributes. You cannot be a mystic all by yourself. Mysticism is a state which requires some relationship to something outside the mystic.

Convincing enough to make this reviewer award a decision on points to Lord Schuster.

J. M. T.