

## BOOK REVIEWS

The author has not just compiled an anthology; he has re-interpreted the stories in the light of later evidence. He shows (p. 111) how the lessons from 1922 and 1924 were appreciated in 1933; and, equally (p. 181), how the Swiss failed to appreciate them fully in 1952. It may be hoped that the success of 1953 will rub home once more the need for acclimatization that the hazardous victory of the French on Annapurna has tended to obscure. Had the Swiss not underestimated this and other factors in 1952, Everest would very possibly have fallen to them.

Some of Murray's views are controversial; he seems to incline toward the post-monsoon period as being the best for climbing Everest; he is dubious about the need of oxygen. He is unlikely to have many supporters of the first opinion but, in view of the experiences of Houston's party on K2 in 1953, he may have powerful backing in his dislike of oxygen. Still, those last 800 to 1000 feet on Everest may make all the difference . . .

It may be noted that Murray (p. 104) holds that Odell saw Mallory and Irvine at the first and not the second step; and he agrees (p. 120) with the view put forward by Smythe that the ice-axe found by Wager and Wyn Harris marked the site of a slip. He suggests that this was probably on the ascent, not the descent. In this case they would (see the line drawing on p. 126) have fallen before they ever reached the first step and the question of whether Odell really saw them at all is in doubt.

S. B. T.

*The Mountain World*, edited by Marcel Kurz for the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, Zurich. 220 pages, 64 illustrations, folding panorama, maps, and sketches. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. Price, \$6.00.

This is an important book, attractively published. It is the eighth of a series prepared by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, but the first edition in English. This and the previous seven editions were published in either French or German, or both, under the titles: *Berge der Welt* or *Montagnes du Monde*.

For many years people wondered why so relatively little had been heard from the Swiss in the Himalayas or the other great mountain ranges of the world outside of their own Alps. Be that as it may, they have now appeared in many lands as contenders

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for top honors in the field of exploratory and high-altitude mountaineering.

This book deals largely but not exclusively with Swiss expeditions. There is an opening chapter on the late Gustav Hasler by Othmar Gurtner. Then a chapter by Marcel Kurz, "A Century of History," covers the attempts to approach Mt. Everest and find the best route up the mountain; the author comments freely, expressing some rather bold opinions. A short chapter by Elizabeth Cowles, "North to Everest," records that, in the fall of 1950, an American party organized by Oscar R. Houston, including Charles S. Houston, Anderson Bakewell, H. W. Tilman and Mrs. Cowles, was the first to approach Everest from the south. Charles Houston and Tilman actually reached 19,000 feet on Pumori, only six miles from the summit of Everest.

More than half the book is devoted to the first Swiss attempt on the great mountain in the spring of 1952. The Swiss party was the first to force a way up the Khumbu glacier above the great icefall, up the Lhotse face to the South Col and almost to the South Peak itself, reaching an altitude of about 28,250 feet. There are also chapters on "A Journey to Gosainkund (Nepal)" by Ella Maillart, "Our Climbs in Bolivia" by Hans Ertz, "The South Peruvian Andes" by Piero Ghiglione, "Mountain Exploration in Northeast Greenland" by six authors, and on the geology and plants of the Everest region.

As often with books of joint authorship, there is considerable variety of style, but this does not obscure the substantive interest. The writing could perhaps be called more literal than literary, but the end result is good. The illustrations are well chosen and beautifully reproduced. Pocketed in one cover is an interesting folding panorama of the entire length of the Khumbu valley and upper basin. The various sketch maps are adequate. There is no index, a curious omission in such a book.

This is one of the most important current mountaineering works in English. With the succeeding volumes, if published, it will find a place in the mountaineering libraries of most collectors aspiring to completeness. Much of the material will not be found elsewhere in English.

HENRY S. HALL, JR.