

## BOOK REVIEWS

the question. In general, however, the material is accurately and well presented. In addition to stating fact, Dr. Dyrenfurth does not hesitate to pass judgment on the course of action taken by the various expeditions. Although the author speaks with authority, readers will not always agree with him. For instance, he criticizes the Americans on K2 in 1938 for wasting time on a reconnaissance which had already been completely carried out by the Duke of the Abruzzi. Careful examination of the material published by the Duke's expedition shows that they recommended no route and declared the mountain unclimbable. Though high in his praise of the personnel and organization of the 1938 expedition, he feels that they did not take enough risk with the weather in not pressing on further with the limited supplies they had available. His opinions regarding the nearly fatal Annapurna expedition are of the greatest interest. The climbers did not seem mentally alert and the author attributes their many irrational acts to the Maxiton pills which they took to ward off the effects of fatigue. He rightly criticizes the use of these highly dangerous drugs. I was surprised that he was not critical of the violent massage given the climbers' frostbitten hands and feet, a practice now long condemned.

Here is certainly the most complete, brief record of what is known about the world's highest mountains. Excellently presented, systematic, and useful for reference, it is at the same time highly readable and interesting to the casual reader and the mountain specialist alike. It is well printed also. The many excellent photographs are beautifully reproduced. In short, the book is well worth reading and owning.

H. A. C.

*Seven Years in Tibet*, by Heinrich Harrer, translated from the German by Richard Graves. Introduction by Peter Fleming. 288 pages, 1 colored frontispiece, and 25 black and white illustrations. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953. Price 16/—. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1954, 314 pages, 46 photographs, and 2 maps. Price, \$5.00.

The author was a member of the 1939 German reconnaissance expedition to Nanga Parbat. On the way home he was picked up

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by the British and interned in a prisoner-of-war camp at the foot of the mountains in northwestern India. Escaping in May 1943, he was recaptured and brought back to the prison camp, where he escaped again in April 1944 and ultimately made his way with one German companion to Lhasa where he lived for five years until the Chinese invaded Tibet. This book is an account of how, by a combination of diplomacy, personal charm, guile, bluff and daring escapes over the passes, the author and his companion arrived in Lhasa after 21 months of effort. The book then details their life there for the next five years, where they worked as translators, engineers, sports instructors, etc., and the author became a personal friend of the Dalai Lama.

In his preface the author says, "As I have no experience as an author I shall content myself with the unadorned facts." And this is precisely what he has done. The result is a simple, charming narrative, with no heroics, no metaphysics, no scorn of primitive conditions but a full recognition of the attractive and unattractive parts of Tibetan life. There are accounts of the great New Year's Festival in Lhasa, of other celebrations, of daily life among monks, nobles, and commoners, of habits, dress, and the common occurrences of life. The book seems to me to give a better picture of life in Tibet than any other I know.

In reading books like this and *No Picnic on Mount Kenya* by Felice Benuzzi, one cannot help being struck with the incredible things that men can accomplish in pursuit of Liberty.

O. R. H.

*The Ultimate Mountains*, by Thomas Weir. 98 pages, 76 photographs, and 4 sketch maps. London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1953.

Thomas Weir was a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Expedition to Garhwal in 1950 and this brief book is his record of it. Rather like a diary at times, the book is at its best in describing actual climbing. The photographs, some by Douglas Scott, well serve their purpose of illustrating the story. It is certainly a book which should be in the possession of anyone planning or hoping to go to Garhwal, but would prove considerably more useful if it contained a more complete map and an index, and were somewhat longer.

JOHN C. OBERLIN