

generation of New Zealand climbers. He writes, therefore, with a thorough knowledge of New Zealand climbing, and in doing so he bridges a gap between the old and the new. The reader can readily grasp a feeling of the development of climbing in New Zealand from the time when the first great summits were sought by daring pioneers, to the present when even more challenging new routes are sought by just as adventurous climbers, albeit now with more modern methods and better equipment.

New Zealand mountaineering is unique. One must grasp the peculiar instability of the weather, particularly of the dread, "North-Wester" (something like the Alpine Föhn wind but giving less warning). One must realize the fact that the snow and ice level is, in general, about 3000 feet lower than in the European Alps, so that with about the same summer temperatures, there is more snow and ice which melts and moves faster, giving frequent rockfalls and ice avalanches, and making every peak the equivalent of a peak 3000 feet higher in European Alpine conditions. One has to appreciate the inaccessibility of some of the ranges, the virtual impassability of some of the valleys and what New Zealand bush-whacking is like, to appreciate the stoutness of heart of the early New Zealand mountaineers, to say nothing of the really rigorous training and mountain experience that New Zealand provides for the present generation.

I remember the well-known New Zealand mountaineer, Professor R. M. Algie saying to me in 1938, when I was enjoying some delightful climbing in New Zealand, that he would not be surprised if New Zealand mountaineers would do well on Everest expeditions because New Zealand conditions gave such good training. I agreed and I felt 15 years later, that it was no coincidence that Edmund Hillary reached the top of Everest. Reading John Pascoe's book it is easy to understand why.

*Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering* will have a valuable place always in New Zealand mountaineering literature. It will always be a delight for mountain lovers to read.

MALCOLM DOUGLAS-HAMILTON

*Guest of the Soviets*, by Joyce Dunsheath. London: Constable & Co., Ltd. 1959. 183 pages, illus. Price 18s.

This book is chiefly interesting to the reviewer, who himself visited the Soviet Union and the Caucasus in 1930, for the changes that have taken place in 27 years, and particularly the highly organized present day sport of mountaineering there, a great contrast to the earlier years.

Mrs. Dunsheath accompanied her husband who was attending an electrical engineering conference in Moscow. She was a guest of the government

in the Caucasus where her official companion was Eugene Gippenreuter of the All-Union Sports Committee of the U.S.S.R. There were two separate visits, the first to the Western Caucasus. Flight from Moscow to Sukhumi on the Black Sea and local flight to Kluhory, followed by a rough bus trip brought them to Camp Dombai, a thoroughly organized climbing center. Here Safridju (The Tooth, 12,300 feet) was climbed with a small party. To the east could be seen Elbruz and Ushba, respectively about 40 and 60 miles away. Then, without explanation, Gippenreuter was recalled to Moscow and Mrs. Dunsheath returned to England, but later in the year the government's invitation was renewed and she came back once again to climb Elbruz. The climb was made in October from a large, new hut "Refuge of Eleven" at 13,000 feet. (In 1930 the climb was done from the then hut at 9000 feet; 9500 up and down in 20 hours including four hours rest at 13,000 feet.) The weather was cold and more or less storming but with a second man, the three made the top, a none too pleasant experience. High wind, broken clouds, and a temperature estimated at 20 below centigrade forced them to start down, and the hut was regained with some difficulty.

Mrs. Dunsheath reports what most visitors to the Soviet Union have: the friendliness of the Russian people and their eagerness to meet outsiders. The book is well written and a welcome addition to the all too scarce information about the Caucasus and its people.

HENRY S. HALL, JR.

*The White Spider, The History of the Eiger's North Face*, by Heinrich Harrer, translated from the German by Hugh Merrick. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959. 240 pages; 41 ills., of which two are in color. Price 30s.

Although this fascinating account of the climbs and tragedies of the Eiger's North Face was reviewed last year when it appeared in German, it seems fitting to call attention to its English translation. The reviewer had merely meant to "look" at the book; before he knew it, he had read it from cover to cover. Herr Harrer writes well and the translation flows smoothly and easily. Although we may wonder whether it is justifiable to make an ascent where the objective dangers are so great, this interesting and complete account makes an excellent defense of these climbs. Without resorting to the cheap sensationalism, which has marred the reporting of the Eiger in the press, this book cannot fail to hold the reader's interest.

H. ADAMS CARTER