
Mountain experiences and tragedies of all periods, from Hannibal to Harrer, form this anthology of original sources in Alpine literature. The reader has before him the adventures of the men who first stood on Mont Ventoux and Mont Aiguille, as well as those of the conquerors of Mont Blanc and its aiguilles, the Schreckhorn, Weisshorn and Matterhorn, the Dachstein and Gross Venediger. Primarily a collection of documents from cave exploring. The action takes place on the Grand Capucin, one of the most beautiful granite obelisks in the Alps, its 1500-foot face rising from the névé of the upper Géant basin as an advanced sentinel of the aiguilles ornamenting the eastern buttresses of Mont Blanc du Tacul. It was first ascended by Bonatti and Ghigo in 1951, after three bivouacs and the placing of 200 pitons. Commentators said that it would never be repeated.

The film required six months in the making. On the mountain itself 30 people worked 25 days, the summit being attained on four occasions and parts of the route being climbed five times. It is without doubt one of the most remarkable unions of professional photography and technical mountaineering, and the climbing shots are supplemented by equally spectacular pictures of the methods used in their making. The courage of the cinema crew in unaccustomed and exposed positions merits the reader's applause and rivals the nonchalance of modern technique, which would have given the Victorians of Grade IV some very bad dreams. The pictorial excellence of the book must be seen to be believed.

J. MONROE THORINGTON


This is an excellent picture-book, showing the scenery, life and people of an Austrian province lying between the Salzkammergut and Vienna. The capital is Graz, a pleasant city of baroque architecture and important museums, whose best-known citizen was romantic Erzherzog Johann, a pioneer of mountaineering in the Eastern Alps. In the western part of the province one finds the snowclad Dachstein, and the Gesäuse group of the Ennsthal. There are also fine lakes in the vicinity of Bad Aussee. The mountain views and climbing scenes include the Trisselwand, Grimming, Planspitze and Dachstein.

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Europe's best known climbers, it is further supplemented by extracts from Livy, Leonardo, Gesner, Goethe and others. The illustrations are striking, but for the most part do not depict actual climbing, the captions being awkwardly placed at the end of the book, which is completed by a full bibliography.

J. Monroe Thorington


The author of three earlier successful mountaineering books, here relates entertaining adventures on many peaks between Vienna and Grenoble. It is one of the most charming books that has come before this reviewer. The writer is a born story-teller, who offers his climbing career as a quest and a pattern of life. He does this tenderly and humorously, and anyone who reads German will find it delightful. This can best be shown by a few quotations:

"There are little rocks to climb in the Wienerwald, and some bear the names of great peaks far away: Matterhorn, La Meije. The Meije in the Wienerwald is scarcely ten metres high, and when I was very small I came upon it by chance. An old climber sat at its foot, smoking a pipe. Who was this 'Lamesch,' I wanted to know, and was surprised to find that it was not named for Herr Lamesch (president of a climbing group, or the inventor of a special knot), but for a mountain, one of the most difficult in the Alps. 'I would like to climb such a peak,' I said, enthralled. 'So would I!' said the old man softly. 'Three times I was at the Promontoire hut and each time the weather beat down. Now I am too old. Life is so short.' There were bird songs in the air, the soft rustle of leaves, the distance laughter of Sunday excursionists. But there was another voice, my inner voice. I knew that this short life was good to use, and as soon as I was able I would climb the real Meije. All the while the smoke from the pipe of the old mountaineer rose slowly across the rocks of the scarcely ten-metre La Meije of the Wienerwald."

*Transportation:* "Once people needed only air, bread and water to sustain life—today they require an auto. Even my friend Schwanda has an auto. He needs it so that Sunday after Sunday he can go to the mountains. All he knows about it is that it has four wheels and that one rides when the machine will run. But it is all important that it takes one to the mountains."

*The wife comes along.* "Many people say to her 'Aha, you are a climber because your husband is!' This puts her into a frenzy (fuchsteufelswild) and she advances the clever theory that she would go climbing even if her husband was a passionate fisherman or a notable butterfly collector."