Base Camp from the summit, fellow climber Michl Dacher ordered flowers for his wife.

A few last nit-pickings: poor grammar and an inaccurate summary of some of the peak's climbing history. Some of the maps contain notable errors—on page 105, the Abruzzi Ridge and route are placed too far to the east.

DEE MOLENAAR

*Filming the Impossible*. Leo Dickinson. Jonathan Cape, London, 1982. 250 pages, color photographs. £12.50.

Rarely does one find in a single person both top-level climbing ability and top-level film-making skills. Leo Dickinson is such a person. His new book, *Filming the Impossible,* recounts his experiences making eleven different outdoor adventure films; with subject matter spanning climbing, ballooning, sky diving, and canoeing.

Dickinson's first documentary film, for Yorkshire Television, was no less than a climber's-eye-view of the north face of the Eiger. Not for Dickinson the long-distance perspective of the Kleine Scheidegg telescopes, or the hovering platform of the helicopter. Dickinson the film maker was also Dickinson the climber, feeling the crunch of his crampons into the brittle surface of the second icefield, and craning his neck worriedly upwards as the high-pitched whine of yet another falling stone narrowly missed Dickinson, the target.

To climb the Eiger Nordwand by any means, under the best of conditions, travelling as lightly as possible, is an achievement that has eluded some of the best mountaineers in the world. Don Whillans, for example, spent many fruitless years in this quest, and did not succeed. Others who have tried, too many, are now only crosses on a route diagram. Dickinson made it, carrying the weighty paraphernalia of the film maker, and brought back a superb documentary.

As with the Eiger, Dickinson's account of the north face of the Matterhorn blends the story of a gripping climb with technical details of filming in the most difficult of terrain.

*Everest Unmasked,* Dickinson's film of the Messner/Habeler oxygenless Everest ascent, rightfully won the Golden Gentian Award at the Trento Film Festival.

Among the other accounts, filming Eric Jones' solo ascent of the north face of the Eiger; the drama of Cerro Torre; and ski exploration of the Patagonian Icecap hold the most interest for climbing readers. However, descent by kayak of the Dudh Kosi, the river that flows from Everest Base Camp, together with accounts of hot-air ballooning and sky diving, provide diverse elements held together by a common thread.

This is a well-written, interesting, albeit somewhat specialized book, written by a person who is unquestionably the world's leading adventure film

maker. Anyone who carries a camera in the mountains, whether still or movie, will profit from the tips to be gleaned from its pages. The ascents themselves, household names in the main, are different when viewed by Dickinson's perceptive eye behind the lens.

BOB GODFREY

*Man at High Altitude*. Donald Heath and David Reid Williams. Churchill Livingstone, New York and London, Second edition, 1981. 347 pages, many illustrations. $65.

*High Altitude Physiology*. Edited by John B. West. Hutchinson Ross, Pennsylvania, 1982. 462 pages. $55.

*High Altitude Physiology and Medicine*. Edited by Walter Brendel and Roman A. Zink. Springer Verlag, New York and Berlin, 1982. 316 pages. $65.

*Hypoxia; Man at High Altitude*. Edited by John Sutton, Norman Jones, and Charles Houston. Thieme-Stratton, New York, 1982. 210 pages. Many illustrations. $35.

*Oxygen Transport to Human Tissues*. Edited by Jack A. Loeppky and Marvin L. Riedesel. Elzevier Medical, New York, 1982. 374 pages. Illustrations. $45.

In the last two years more books have been written about high altitude and our accomodation to lack of oxygen than in the last quarter century. And a good thing too, what with the great increase in high-altitude mountaineering and accompanying increase in death and disability from avoidable, preventable illnesses. Climbers by nature are risk-takers perhaps, but there are risks and risks, and some may be taken to test oneself, but others seem a futile, foolish macho exercise. There's a middle ground—testing our physiological limits. How high, how fast can the human climb? How much cold, wind, privation can one endure? These are legitimate expansions of human capability—much like running an ever-faster marathon, or rowing alone around the world. We have to admire, even applaud such efforts, always bearing in mind Mallory's question about climbing: "Whom have we conquered? None but ourselves."

At any rate, he who wishes to challenge the effects of high altitude should understand the risks and these books will help, although unfortunately these particular ones, the best and most up-to-date, are written in medi-speak and much of their contents hard for the nonprofessional to grasp.

*Man at High Altitude* is a second, extensively revised edition of a major book, probably the single most authoritative book on high altitude today. It is well written and put together, extensively illustrated with photographs, charts, and diagrams which for the most part are easy to understand. It covers the entire field of high-altitude lack of oxygen thoroughly as the title promises, but does not deal with cold, heat, cosmic radiation, or illness and trauma. If one wishes