

BOOK REVIEWS

Himalayan Assault, by the French Himalayan Expedition, 1936.

Translated into English by Nea E. Morin. Introduction by Hon. C. G. Bruce. 8vo.; xv + 203 pages, with 48 gravure plates and 3 maps. London: Methuen & Co., 1938. Price 15 s.

An expedition costing \$55,000, carrying 13 tons of equipment, and requiring fifty Sherpas and camp servants as well as 650 regular coolies staggers the imagination of the average mountaineer. And he is even more amazed when he hears that 900 porters were really needed, but because the countryside could afford no more than 650, "We had therefore to abandon *everything that was not strictly necessary* and to rearrange the remaining loads." Such an expedition brings nightmares to the exponent of small mountaineering parties. Yet the 1936 French Expedition to Hidden Peak, despite its enormous size, made a respectable showing. With reasonable luck in the weather, this first French expedition to the Himalayas would probably have reached its objective and succeeded in gaining the top of Hidden Peak (26,470 ft.)—a higher summit than any yet attained. One says "despite its enormous size," for it seems clear that the expedition's bulk made vastly more difficult its approach to the mountain.

Most of the ten members of the expedition write sections of the book. The major portions concern the Preparation (obtaining permission from the Kashmir government, and selecting the peak and the personnel of the party), The Journey to Base Camp (a month's undertaking), The Base Camp Diary, The Assault, and The Return. The first section will interest anyone who has run or hopes to run an expedition of his own. Henry de Segogne, leader of the party, gives the picture of the attack from the point of view of the leader. He stayed at Base Camp and coordinated the advance most cleverly by means of short-wave radio communication with the climbing parties. (The future use of such communication in Himalayan climbing may well be greater, for its value in this case is clearly shown.) The story of the assault on the mountain repeats the story told from the Base Camp, but this time it has more freshness, for it is told from the climbers' point of view. One feels, however, that some of the repetition could

be avoided. In the chapter on the march into the mountain, one also feels that Capt. Streatfield, the British liaison officer, who must have done wonders with the enormous transport caravan, receives little if any credit for his remarkable work.

A very important part of the book consists of six appendices. These discuss the use of skis in the Himalaya, consider the geology of Baltistan, and very ably define the party's carefully selected camping and mountaineering equipment, the photographic materials and the wireless. The appendix on diet and medical kit is especially interesting and shows careful attention. One might add that the commissary of the Club expedition to K2 this past summer sympathizes with the French commissary who laments that "by the seventh day of the attack 300 days of sahib's provisions were consumed instead of seventy!" These appendices are the most valuable part of the book, though the average reader will no doubt prefer the story of the attack.

R. H. B.

Himalayan Quest, by Paul Bauer. Foreword by Sir Francis Younghusband. Translated from the German by E. G. Hall. Small 4to; xxv and 150 pages, with 96 illustrations. London: Nicholson and Watson, 1938. Price 21 s.

One of my disappointments this past summer came in failing by a few days to meet Paul Bauer on his return to Srinagar from the unsuccessful 1938 Nanga Parbat Expedition. I did, however, see several other members of that fine party and quickly learned why the German climbers are so tremendously popular in Kashmir. They like life and enjoy living so much that they can't help making friends. It is no wonder then that the Europeans of Srinagar regard the disaster to the German party of 1937 as a personal injury.

Himalayan Quest, the story of splendid fellows and fine mountaineers, shares with us in its pages the triumphs and disasters of two seasons. We thrill to the 1936 conquest of Simvu, Nepal Peak and Siniolchum, in the first part of the book. Wien's story of the actual summit climb on Siniolchum is especially well done, and the account of his adventurous journey through the Passanram Valley is also noteworthy. Wien in the following year became leader of the 1937 Nanga Parbat Expedition, the party whose story