

BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Whymper, by Frank S. Smythe. 8 vo., xiv + 330 pages, with illustrations, map and index. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1940. Price \$6.00.

There are new things in this book: the striking frontispiece portrait by Lance Calkin, and reproductions of Whymper's engravings, not all of which are generally known. There is little doubt but that this work will become the classic biography of the Matterhorn's conqueror, for it has had the sympathetic handling of the author as well as cooperation from the subject's surviving relatives. The early diaries, here published for the first time, throw light on developmental features in Whymper's character, a serious youth sent to the Alps as an artist, thereafter drawn to them as explorer, but never forgetting his artistry. In this lies the secret of the literary vitality of *Scrambles*, by which his memory will be kept alive.

Mr. Smythe naturally devotes much of the book to the Matterhorn, to Greenland and the travels in the Andes, and presents a penetrating analysis of his hero's shortcomings. "He had no friends; he did not even appear to want to have friends; Nature alone was his friend and that only in a remote, detached sort of way difficult to analyze or describe. He moved through life, one part of him, the intellectual part, awake, the other part, the intuitive, sympathetic part asleep. . . . Edward Whymper passed without fulfilling or expressing himself as he might have done, a great man who might have been far greater." This unfortunate temperament was not improved by the horror of the Matterhorn accident which hovered over him during later life, and from which neither intemperance or an ill-considered matrimonial venture provided avenues of escape.

Too little is said about the Canadian episodes, and it is unjust to intimate that Klucker's outbursts were the cause of failure in 1901; the halls of the old hotel at Field echo too many memories. Witness also the success of the guides when climbing by themselves or with Outram, for whose companionship Klucker had nothing but praise.