

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Manual of American Mountaineering*, edited by Kenneth A. Henderson. American Alpine Club, New York. Privately printed for purposes of copyright and not available for distribution. Trade edition to be issued by Houghton Mifflin Co. early in 1942.

This little book represents the successful accomplishment of a very difficult feat: the production in a few months by a group of experts of an authoritative manual covering the fundamentals of living and movement in rugged wilderness country at all times of year. It is part of the war effort of the American Alpine Club and is designed to facilitate the training of our defense forces for operations in such terrain.

This, of course, is breaking new ground. But one must note another innovation which the title highlights—the fact that it is the first manual to treat American Alpinism as a subject by itself; to indicate that our mountaineering demands now a text of its own.

The present format, with matter and pictures in separate booklets, is temporary. Later they will be combined into a single volume under the title *Handbook of Mountain Climbing and Travel*. Until then, detailed comment is idle, but the intimation may be permitted that never before in a book of this kind have explanatory pictures been so lavishly utilized—over 300 of them.

H. P.

*High Conquest: The Story of Mountaineering*, by James Ramsey Ullman, 8 vo., 334 pp., illustrations and maps. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1941. Price \$3.75.

This is as good a popular history of mountaineering as any in the language. It is intelligently organized, reasonably accurate, and written with dash. Some readers may prefer the public school prose of Mr. Irving's *Romance of Mountaineering*, but the tone of *High Conquest*, youthful and robust, is more appropriate to the subject.

Mr. Ullman's first chapters deal briefly with the prehistory of climbing and at some length with the conquest of Mont Blanc. The exploits of Empedocles, Hadrian, Philip of Macedon, of Antoine de Ville, Leonardo, Gesner and Simler are mentioned in passing.

For Mr. Ullman and his reader the story of mountaineering begins in 1786, with the first complete ascent of Mont Blanc. The usual date—1854—is given for the dawn of the “Golden Age.” Mr. Ullman does not attempt to record in detail the hundreds of notable climbs that took place in the next decade. The leading figures of the period are named and the nature of their achievements suggested. Next comes an account of the Matterhorn ascent and disaster, followed by a chapter bringing the story of Alpine mountaineering forward to the present. Modern methods (“mechanized” climbing) are described, and Mr. Ullman has some pointed things to say of the cult of danger fostered, chiefly, by German and Italian climbers, and typified by north face climbs on the Matterhorn, Grandes Jorasses and, most conspicuously, the Eiger.

Succeeding chapters deal with the spread of mountaineering to other ranges. Mr. Ullman’s method is to epitomize the history of a district in the story of a single outstanding ascent. Stuck’s ascent of McKinley, FitzGerald’s of Aconcagua, the Duke of Abruzzi’s expedition to the Ruwenzori, are the foci of interest in the chapters on North and South America and Africa. The account of Himalayan climbing is longer and more detailed, and an entire chapter is devoted to a summary of the several attempts on Everest. For some reason, the description of the mountains of the United States and Canada is relegated to the third and final division of Mr. Ullman’s book, which also includes a discussion of climbing technique and a valedictory on what might be called the higher values of climbing. The book concludes with three appendices: a Note on Volcanos, an altitude table of “100 Famous Mountains,” and an extensive reading list.

Within a month of its publication last fall, *High Conquest* had been reviewed at favorable length in daily and weekly newspapers which seldom give much if any attention to mountaineering books. The reason is easily seen: *High Conquest*, unlike most mountaineering books, is written for non-climbers and for climbers new to the game, with no very extensive knowledge of its background. It is essentially a popularization of its subject, and it has all the qualities that a good popularization should have. The reader senses at once Mr. Ullman’s enthusiasm for his subject and quickly comes to share it. Mountaineering in the United States is in the development stage; there can be little doubt that the wide circulation of Mr. Ullman’s book will speed the process.

E. C.