

Lebanon. Anderson Bakewell writes of climbing 8620-ft. Mt. Sannine in December 1947.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

Contraction Bolts. Ralph Widrig and Joe Hieb, of the Seattle Mountaineers, have developed a contraction bolt, shown in the illustration opposite page 225. Fred Beckey writes:¹

"We have $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch star drills, cut down to five inches in length, fitted into a $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch octagonal sleeve. A set screw allows easy changing of drills. The bolt is $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter and three inches long. Two saw cuts, at right angles, are made at one end. These $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cuts taper in width from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch, making the bolt diameter half an inch at one end, tapering to $\frac{9}{16}$ of an inch. The other end is flattened to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch and has a welded ring for karabiners or slings. A bolt can be put in hard granite in 13 minutes, supporting over 2000 lbs. Inserted completely, it can not be removed and can serve as an excellent belay point in the absence of piton cracks. To support one's weight on a flawless pitch, one can drill a shorter hole, taking from five to eight minutes.

"The use of bolts and cod lines in mountaineering is limited to exceptionally difficult stretches or sheer monoliths. I do not believe in blacksmithing a route up a cement wall—that is not climbing—but recently we have met peaks that would be impossible even with aid pitons. The choice remains: to retreat, or to use a few bolts to overcome a flawless pitch. Now that there is an efficient way to overcome such pitches, an old question arises: how far shall we go in using artificial aids?"

He adds, "We recently climbed two peaks in the Cashmere Crags that required rope-throwing to scale summit blocks—they were hopeless any other way. If that is unethical, these two peaks I am sure would forever remain unclimbed. In this same area are a score of other peaks that appear to have stretches that will require aids beyond piton usage. But I am sure that in time climbers will knowingly tackle them rather than ignore them."

Motion pictures: "Black Narcissus" and "Climbing the Matterhorn." This is the first time that professional motion pictures have

¹ Cf. page 117 above.

been reviewed in the *A.A.J.*, but two which have recently come before our eyes require some mention.

Black Narcissus, taken from Rumer Godden's novel (1939), tells of a group of Protestant nuns who attempt a mission in an ancient deserted palace in the Himalaya, with Kangchenjunga as the background and the ever-present sweeping gales of this high country. It is the story of a failure, for the winds and the loneliness result in various outbursts of hysteria and madness in the nunnery, whose inhabitants, thus additionally tormented, can not entirely forget the earthly passions of a life they have renounced. This will be particularly clear to those who have read the moving book, but here one can only praise the artistic settings in which the British company has framed the tale—the noteworthy company including Deborah Kerr, Sabu, Flora Robson, and the British agent whose name eludes us. To one who has never been in India, the local color is beautifully and artistically carried out, the palace exteriors and interiors giving an extremely true effect. As there are apparently no accessible color films of Kangchenjunga, the backgrounds are all artificial, but they are well done and effectively suggest the light and immensity of great mountains. One wonders why, with such success, a color photo of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau is used in the main caption of the film.

The Academy Award given *Climbing the Matterhorn* is presumably for its excellent photography in Ansco color film. The opening scenes of the village street of Zermatt, the procession of goats, the children singing beside the ancient hay-huts, the porters and omnibuses at the station, all awaken one's nostalgia for a mountain land lost to us in the war years. But then we are asked to be content with the silly story that follows. Not one foot of the incidents takes place on the Matterhorn itself, although that is said to be the locale of the action. After some wandering on the Gornergletscher the party of three, two tourists and a guide, are found hard at work in rocks quite evidently of the Riffelhorn. The guide falls and pulls down the lady who is in the middle of the rope, but the stalwart husband, ascending last, holds the party—his wife and the guide remaining *suspended in air* through an entire night, during which time an enormous rescue party lopes like a group of Keystone Comedy cops from the center of Zermatt to the scene of the accident. As the guide wears the large badge of the S.A.C., one understands

why members of that organization objected vociferously when the film was shown in London. It is disheartening to the mountaineer to see such dishonest work, for the film began with great integrity and could easily have been a thing of entrancing beauty.

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