

Buch der Talschaft Lauterbrunnen, by Hans Michel. 503 pages, including bibliography, 64 photographic illustrations and six color plates from old prints. Interlaken: Verlag Otto Schläefli. Price, 50 Swiss francs.

An interesting recent development in Alpine literature is the succession of local social histories, many of which we have reviewed in these pages—Gräber's *Volksleben in Kärnten*, Perkonig's *Kärnten, deutscher Süden*, Weiss's *Volkskunde der Schweiz*, Guichonnet's *Visages de la Savoie*, Veyret's similar work on Dauphiné (both in the Horizons de France series), as well as the books on Swiss cantons, six of which have already appeared in the Volkserbe der Schweiz series.

The present massive work covers the occurrences and customs in the Lauterbrunnen villages during the seven centuries from 1240 to 1949. It has additional chapters on the streams and waterfalls, the animal and plant life of the mountains. There are reproductions of 13th-century documents in which Lauterbrunnen ("in claro fonte") is first mentioned; there are genealogical tables; there is an interesting historical discussion of the early routes (chiefly the Wetterlücke and the Petersgrat) connecting the Lauterbrunnenthal with the Lötschenthal. The illustrations are well chosen; they include fine pictures of avalanches, waterfalls and climbing, and some superb reproductions of Lory's color prints.

J. M. T.

The Story of Mountains, by Ferdinand C. Lane. 488 pages, with tables and index; 32 full-page illustrations from photographs and a panoramic end-paper. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1950. Price, \$6.50.

This is one of a series of books on global geography. Preceding volumes have dealt with seas, lakes and rivers. It is an immense assignment. *The Story of Mountains* does not fulfil the publisher's promise that it "contains everything there is to know about mountains; their origin, their structure, their vegetation, their importance in history and literature, and their effect upon man himself." The portions given over to physical geography are extremely interesting; one learns a lot about heights and depths, mountain sculpturing, climate and geography. There are numbers of useful reference tables.

But the author has not proofread proper names, and he is not a profound mountaineering historian. Among misprints of names one finds Stabler for Stabeler (p. 11), Fulsom for Folsom (p. 59), Bancroft for Barcroft (p. 172), Mourad-Aas for Monrad-Aas (p. 173), Coutlet for Couttet (p. 369), Fall for Hall (p. 387), Zerbrüggen for Zurbriggen (p. 402) and Lorch for Lord (p. 427). In the field of climbing history, the mistakes are worse. It has long been known that Kinney and Phillips did not reach the highest point of Mt. Robson (p. 96). The Columbia Icefield is not solely in British Columbia (p. 152). The author has confused Andreas Hofer, of the Tyrol, with Arnold von Winkelried, the Swiss hero of 1386 (p. 207). The summit of the Jungfrau is 1834 ft., not "a few hundred feet," above the Jungfrauoch (p. 212). The Engadine is a valley, not a range (p. 346). The account of the ascent of the Matterhorn (p. 363) is, as the publisher suggests, "unforgettable"—but largely, as the publisher does not suggest, on account of its inaccuracy. The author has no comprehension of the part taken by Dr. Paccard in the first ascent of Mont Blanc (p. 386). Josias Simler was born in 1530, not in 1672 (p. 417). The latter year was that of Dr. Scheuchzer's birth.

The illustrations are magnificent, being chiefly from the American Alpine Club's Sella Collection.

J. M. T.

Steve Mather of the National Parks, by Robert Shankland. 326 pages, 24 illustrations, with an introduction by Gilbert Grosvenor. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951. Price, \$4.00.

There are really several books within these covers. First, there is the authorized biography of a great public benefactor who has been insufficiently appreciated outside a relatively narrow circle. Stephen Mather's vision and energy were largely responsible, as must now be realized more widely, for making many of our most important mountain ranges so accessible. Second, there is an authoritative history, from the earliest days to the present, of our National Park Service. The author has had access to a wealth of documentary material, much of which seems never before to have been revealed to the public. Third, there is a fascinating account of high-level politics in Washington, and of the struggles waged by conservationists—particularly Mather himself—against the pressures exerted by repre-