

sentatives of various special interests. The author, whose style is as clear and bracing as good Western air, tells numbers of interesting anecdotes about men of eminence in the Washington scene and about picturesque figures of the West. One exceptionally dramatic story is of an Arizona politician's protracted efforts to keep the Grand Canyon out of the public domain. Much of Mather's success was due to his gift at enlisting in support of the National Parks such public-spirited citizens as Mr. Rockefeller. Fourth, there is an illuminating account of the borax industry, which gave to Mather the personal fortune that enabled him to dedicate himself, in the best years of his life, to the preservation for our citizens of many of our country's natural beauties.

Like all true Californians, Mather grew up to be a lover of rugged skylines. For most of his adult years, he was an active member of the Sierra Club. In 1904 he visited Switzerland, and in 1905 he climbed Rainier. From that time on, most of his summer vacations were spent in the Sierras or the Rockies. Though his record of ascents may not have been spectacular, it was long and continuous, and included many peaks of 10,000 ft. or more. In any case, his record of public service is such that climbers in this country owe him an eternal debt of gratitude.

HENRY E. MILLS

Scholar Mountaineers, by Wilfrid Noyce. 164 pages, with 12 full-page illustrations and wood-engravings by R. Taylor. London: Dennis Dobson, 1950. Price, 12/6.

What does the title *Scholar Mountaineers* lead one to expect? Maybe a series of essays about dons who have climbed, or an account of the climbers who have written scholarly works on the history and literature of mountaineering. Instead of either of these, Wilfrid Noyce has given us, under this title, a dozen brief, informal studies of figures whom he describes as "Pioneers of Parnassus": Dante, Petrarch, Rousseau, De Saussure, Goethe, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Keats, Ruskin, Leslie Stephen, Nietzsche, Pope Pius XI and Captain Scott. Each of them is studied "simply in relation to mountains"; each is considered as having made "a peculiar contribution to a certain feeling in us." Such is the author's interest in them (and, of course, in mountains) that a reader is soon prepared to suppress the little question that nags at first: How many were "scholars," and how many were "mountaineers"?

Reading on, one becomes more and more interested in these selective treatments of the "Pioneers," and in the differentiation of attitudes which they expressed or—in most cases quite unintentionally—fostered. Dante appears, for example, as "the trembling and unwieldy novice" who "comes near to wrecking the whole expedition through Hell"; and Keats is detected in a moment of what seems to be bravado—composing a sonnet on the summit of Ben Nevis. The discrimination of various attitudes toward mountains, Nature and action induces renewal of inquiry concerning the motives of (say) our friend X. What does a mountain stand for, in his eyes—cathedral, or laboratory, or gymnasium? Coming out of the mountains, is he filled with wonder and humility, or with satisfaction over his prowess? Is his climbing sport, or is it sublimation? Does his experience seem to have bound him closer to life and his fellow beings; or has it rather set him apart, in contemptuous and lonely pessimism? Can it perhaps be said that, after all, X just climbs because he likes to? *Scholar Mountaineers* encourages fresh pointing of all such questions.

D. A. ROBERTSON, JR.

First on the Rope, by Roger Frison-Roche. Translated by Janet Adam Smith. 246 pages. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950. Price, \$2.75.

Written by a mountaineer and skier who is thoroughly familiar with the region of Chamonix, *First on the Rope* has already achieved status as a best-seller in France. Now, translated into English by Janet Adam Smith, author of *Mountain Holidays*, it is bound to turn up, I should think, on the reading lists of mountaineers throughout this country. So few works of fiction deal explicitly and at length with climbing that it would be very difficult to forego the pleasure of giving this one a trial.

The first part, "The Birth of a Vocation," sets forth the circumstances of a fatal accident. Jean Servettaz, a guide of great experience and ability, reluctantly continues an ascent of the Dru, under threatening conditions of weather, at the insistence of his American client, Henry Warfield, Jr. Lightning strikes the party and kills Servettaz. The porter Georges à la Clarisse succeeds in bringing the hysterical Warfield down ("Alone with a loony on the Drus—what a nice trade a guide's is!"), but suffers severe frostbite. Pierre