

J. D. Forbes forms the chief link between Saussure and the founders of the Alpine Club. It was the small dinner at the Leasowes, home of William Mathews, Sr., on November 6, 1857, at which the project was discussed, and the first meeting of the club took place on December 22. The proposed rule that "a candidate shall not be eligible unless he shall have ascended to the top of a mountain 13,000 feet in height," was objected to by Albert Smith and others, and was rejected. No one conceived that the organization "would be the parent of fruitful children, some of them more prolific than itself." John Ball was the first president. *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* was succeeded by the *Alpine Journal*. The books of Wills, Hinchliff, and Hudson and Kennedy did much to increase interest in mountaineering.

Zermatt had become the fashionable center as the popularity of Chamonix declined. Monte Rosa was the objective, soon to be eclipsed by the Matterhorn and its tragedy. And so the quickening enthusiasm spread to more distant terrain: the Caucasus, North America, the Southern Hemisphere, the Himalaya. Anglo-Saxon climbers at least, will be in agreement with the author's creed "that there is an influence more purifying than danger in the beauty of the snows; and that among the countless ridges and recesses of the Alps we shall find an outlet for the energies of youth without having constantly before our eyes immediate prospects of dissolution."

J. MONROE THORINGTON

*Commando Climber*, by Mike Banks. 240 pages, 18 photos, sketches. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1955. Price, 18 s.

The author is a captain of the Royal Marines who served with the 3rd Commando Brigade in Burma during the last war, and then returned to England and became a climbing instructor on the Cornish sea cliffs. His stories are not of his wartime service but rather of his experiences training men to ascend the very steep and difficult cliffs, his climbing excursions to Scotland and Cyprus, service on Malta, and enterprising exploratory tours in Greenland. He is particularly successful in taking the reader with him on these latter journeys, and he makes that northern land seem most intriguing.

The book concludes with a description of a moonlight ascent of Route Major on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc, obviously something of a feat. Nevertheless, it leaves one with the feeling that the author's main interest is in difficult rock climbing problems rather than in general mountaineering. Although without very much continuity, and therefore suitable for bedtime, it makes pleasant reading.

JOHN C. OBERLIN