

following the two notorious avalanches that struck the village of Blons, Austria, in January 1954. It is written to be a popular book and gives greatest emphasis to the events as they appeared to the residents of this village. It makes some attempt to appear scientific, at which it is not at all successful. However, as a narrative of an historical event it is satisfactory. The reader should not feel that he is going to acquire any genuine or valuable knowledge of the theory, control, or prevention of avalanches; but he may acquire a few good ideas, since this field is still in its relative infancy.

WILLIAM L. PUTNAM

Die Weisse Spinne—Die Geschichte der Eiger Nordwand by Heinrich Harrer. West Berlin: Ullstein A.G., 1958, many illustrations, some colored.

Heinrich Harrer, a member of the first rope to climb the Northface of the Eiger, is well qualified to write the history of its climbs. He covers the time up to the 13th ascent in 1958, twenty years after the first successful climb. The name of the book is derived from the icefield located in the upper third of the Northface which is shaped like a giant white spider. Avalanches, rocks and water, coming from above are funneled through the spider which cannot be bypassed, but must be crossed by the Northface aspirant. It is here where the climbers face the greatest danger and severest test of their endurance, of which Harrer gives a fascinating account. He also tries to shed light on the mystery surrounding the fate of some of the teams which perished on the mountain. The conclusions he reaches are interesting, though the final answer rests forever with the climbers who died in their attempt to climb the Northface.

HORST VON HENNIG

The Gods Are Angry, by Wilfrid Noyce. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1957. 214 pages. Price \$3.75.

No one has a better right than Wilfrid Noyce to write a novel about a Himalayan expedition from the inside, after an apprenticeship in Garhwal and Sikkim during the war and the major expeditions to Everest and Machapuchare in 1953 and 1957. He understands well how to convey the atmosphere, from the gathering of the team to the contacts with Sherpas and porters, the approach to the mountain, and the existence in cold and rarefied air in the high camps. Changma is a sacred mountain surrounded by local superstition. Will the expedition reach its objective?

Wilfrid Noyce is mainly interested in portraying the very different per-

sonalities of the six men who make up the team, their attitudes toward the mountain, each other and the women they leave behind, their motives for embarking on what most people would call a wild goose chase. This is a fascinating but difficult undertaking, and though it does not invariably succeed, yet the story never flags. The key to Noyce's belief seems to lie in the thoughts expressed by the leader of the expedition: "The important truth . . . is that the thing for which risk is run will be always worth that risk and more. . . . If humans are mortal there is something immortal however small in human endeavor . . . he who denies himself endeavor is like the man who, Dante says, made the great refusal, for he refused his own talents."

URSULA CORNING

The Springs of Adventure, by Wilfrid Noyce. Cleveland and New York:

The World Publishing Company, 1958. 255 pages; 21 ill. Price \$4.00. We have all had to cope with that eternal question of the non-climber—"Why do you do it?" Hereafter, I shall merely refer any questioner to *The Springs of Adventure*.

This is a really impressive book. For some 250 pages Wilfrid Noyce—of Everest, Machupuchare, etc.—considers and analyzes the various motivations of adventure. He classifies them under such chapter heads as, "The Hair Shirt," "The Anatomy of Pleasure," "Escape Simple," "Fame and Money," etc. To illustrate each category, he has chosen short and long quotations from the writings of all types of "adventurer," not only mountaineers, but sailors, aviators and balloonists, and explorers of wild and unknown regions all over the globe, up to—or, rather, down to—skin-divers at the sea bottom, and spelunkers in their caves. His "far from complete" bibliography includes some 135 volumes. The quotations are supplemented by sketches of their authors and their activities.

Just these personal glimpses alone would be well worth the price of admission. They introduce us to so many fine people. Some of them are old acquaintances, whom it is good to know more intimately through their own words. Some are newcomers, and it is a great pleasure and privilege to meet them.

As to Mr. Noyce's theories, they are always interesting, and bear evidence of much study and original thought. It would be easy to find points here or there to which to take exception. But any comment would be only one reader's judgment, for in this sort of matter I imagine no two people would agree completely. All such classifications and evaluations are inevitably artificial and arbitrary, and likely to be personal in their emphases. But the author disarms our criticism at the beginning: "At one time I thought I