

member of the group that prepared the book. The plants themselves have helped by finding a way to survive winters in the White Mountains, and we salute them. The book contains keys, and clear, concise descriptions of many species. It belongs in your knapsack.

THOMAS H. JUKES

*A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley* by Steve Roper. San Francisco; Sierra Club, 1964. 190 pages, 40 photographs with 15 line drawings by Al MacDonald. \$4.75.

Yosemite Valley, the finest pure rock-climbing area in the United States, is a paradox in American climbing, for it is also one of the most neglected. Mr. Roper's excellent guidebook should succeed not only in creating the interest which Yosemite deserves in other areas of the country, but also in dispelling some of the misconceptions concerning this remarkable area which sees so few climbers from outside California.

One need only to compare this guide with the Yosemite section of the old *Climber's Guide to the High Sierra* to realize how far climbing has developed in Yosemite in the last ten years, and what an outstanding job Steve Roper has done in grading and describing the more than 300 routes which now exist in the Valley. The book incorporates several features of its predecessor. It would be difficult to improve upon the climbing history which was written for the old Guide and it is included intact in the introduction to the new one. There are also a section dealing with the special equipment peculiar to Yosemite and a glossary of terms used in the route descriptions.

Mr. Roper has included in his introduction some rather controversial observations concerning the motivation and mental attitude of certain Yosemite climbers. He is highly critical of climbers who climb for publicity, of "specialists" in climbing technique, and of the competitive aspect of Yosemite climbing. He also devotes space to a discussion of climbing ethics, covering such topics as siege climbing and bolt chopping. Although this reviewer feels that most climbers will not agree with Mr. Roper's opinions, it must be said that his introduction does provide a candid portrait of Yosemite climbing and it does succeed in explaining why so few climbers have come to Yosemite from other areas and why the few who come rarely feel like returning.

What remains of the guidebook are 150 pages of route descriptions of everything from fourth-class scrambles to the grandeur of Half Dome and El Capitan. The route descriptions are neither so vague as to be useless nor as detailed as Leigh Ortenburger's *Guide to the Tetons*. A guidebook can never replace a climber's own self-reliance and route-

finding ability; the Yosemite Guide has been written in a manner which provides the minimum information necessary for the experienced climber exercising his own judgment and imagination. Mention is made of any special equipment (rurps, knifeblades, bongs) which might be needed for a particular route, as well as helpful information concerning approaches and routes of descent.

Like its predecessor, the present Guide is arranged so that the climbs are listed geographically. The text is enhanced by 40 fine photographs and the route descriptions are supplemented with some excellent line drawings by Al MacDonald which aid greatly in locating routes, particularly in some of the more obscure climbing areas such as the Three Brothers.

The grading system used combines the Tahquitz "decimal" system for rating the free-climbing pitches with the NCCS designations of A1 through A6 for rating the direct-aid pitches. In addition, a Roman numeral from I to VI is used to define the overall difficulty of each route as compared to a selected standard. Since a system of grading climbs has yet to be accepted nationally, some confusion may result over the grading system for Yosemite. One must remember that a Yosemite grade VI is *not* necessarily equivalent to a grade VI elsewhere.

Apparently Mr. Roper did little consulting with other climbers when deciding upon the grade and classification of the various climbs; many climbers have expressed disagreement with several of the ratings in the guidebook. In general, Mr. Roper tends to underrate certain climbs in the 5.8-5.9 category, judging them, perhaps, on the number of climbers who have climbed them rather than on an objective standard.

Unlike most climbers' guides, the Yosemite Guide seems written for the expert rather than for the average climber. Of the 40 photographs, nearly half were taken on grade VI climbs, and in his introduction, Mr. Roper explains that the time required to ascend a grade V is the same as for a grade IV, since only the experts will be climbing a grade V and are capable of climbing them faster than an average party. To be sure, Sentinel Rock, the Lost Arrow, Half Dome and El Capitan are the climbs for which Yosemite is famous, but these severe routes account for only ten percent of the total number. What the Guide fails to stress adequately is that in the remaining 90% will be found climbs suited to *all* levels of proficiency.

Like all guidebooks, the Yosemite Guide must inevitably become outdated. Since its appearance early in the summer of 1964, this reviewer has noted some two dozen changes which have already occurred, including new routes and variations in old ones. Doubtless there will be more

changes in the coming seasons. Yet Steve Roper's valuable work should remain useful for many years, not only as a guidebook, but also as an historic record of the development of Yosemite climbing. If it succeeds in stimulating a greater interest in the Valley on the part of climbers outside California, then perhaps Yosemite may yet achieve the popularity that it deserves.

CHARLES PRATT

*Sierra Nevada Natural History, An Illustrated Handbook* by Tracy I. Storer and Robert L. Usinger. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California; University of California Press, 1963. 374 pages; 24 color plates. Price \$4.95.

A compact guide to the fauna and flora of the Sierra Nevada by two eminent biologists who know the mountains. More than 750 species or groups of plants and animals are described. The book includes discussions of climate, topography, geological history, and the effect of man on the "Range of Light." It contains condensed and vivid descriptions of birds, flowers, insects, mammals and trees, together with a comprehensive and erudite treatment of the visage of nature. The illustrations are excellent.

THOMAS H. JUKES

*The North Central Cascades.* A painted pictorial relief map in oblique aerial view. Copyrighted by George W. Martin and Richard A. Pargeter. Price \$2.25.

The Cascade Range of Washington shows the intricacies of the structural and geomorphological story behind the present mountains. Owing to a past record of overlapping structural alignment between ancient and present range, and to further complications attributed to more youthful Ice Age sculpture, the geography of the Cascades is complex. In the past, government contour maps have hinted at the extreme ruggedness of topography between ridges and adjacent valleys . . . some have shown, through addition of green overlays, differentiation between dense forests and open upper ridges, while others have shown, through shaded relief treatment, the complex pattern of valley and ridge trends. However, until recently none have clearly presented an eagle's eye view of the true beauty of this tremendous mountain landscape. Now, due to the vision of George W. Martin and to the artistic facility of Richard A. Pargeter, a map has been made available that colorfully and graphically illustrates the central part of the Cascades in oblique aerial view. The 22-inch by 30-inch map includes about 5200 square miles, from the Snoqualmie Pass area on the south to the Dome Peak-Spire Point area in the north, and from the Puget Sound lowland and Cascade foothills on the west to