

# Book Reviews

EDITED BY GALEN A. ROWELL

*Mountain of Storms, The American Expeditions to Dhaulagiri, 1969 and 1973*, by Andrew Harvard and Todd Thompson. New York: Chelsea House, New York University Press, 210 pages. 52 pages of black and white illustrations and 14 color plates plus maps. Price \$15.00.

Any expedition that climbs Dhaulagiri has a story to tell and Harvard and Thompson bring an invigorating freshness, a sort of Rover Boy brashness, to their tale. Most moving part of the book is Lou Reichardt's account of the avalanche that ended the 1969 expedition. We are with eight climbers concentrating on bridging a crevasse when a wave of snow and ice blocks roar down. We crouch. The flood of powder pours over us, slows, stops, and the last ice chunks bound past. We call. Nobody answers. Nobody. Nobody is there! The suddenness shocks us violently as it did Lou Reichardt, the lone survivor, in 1969.

The authors move quickly to the 1973 expedition where their main problems are the split objectives of the party, their own unfamiliarity with the Himalayas and what they call "the ponderous mass of the expedition." They frankly state that several months before reaching the mountain "a definite split existed in the group between those whose attention and commitment centered on the new route, the southeast ridge, and those who were primarily interested in reaching the summit." This split complicates the expedition and flaws the unity and suspense of the book. The authors are mainly interested in climbing the southeast ridge, a route that could have been reconnoitered from the air and ruled out. When the crest of the ridge is reached after a 2,000-foot climb and the two miles of ridge beyond are shown to lack campsites the comment is made, "Without the ridge the expedition made no sense to many of us."

The authors' story is complicated by the mass of men and equipment. There are 16 American climbers and nine high-altitude porters, seven tons of food, gifts from 74 industrial donors and air lifts that include 60 boxes dropped at 19,300 feet in one day. It is no wonder that suspense lags in the latter part of the book. The authors give vivid details of life at Camp II and the effects of the wind there but we don't share with Roskelley, Reichardt and Ngawang Samden their exhausting struggle towards the summit. The reaction to their triumph emphasizes again the split objectives of the party.

Drummond Rennie has an appendix on his examination of retinal hemorrhages and there are useful notes and glossaries. In one of these it would be better to say that Sherpas and Tibetans who live south of

what is now the Nepal border rather than "highlanders of Mongoloid extraction." Though the black and white photographs are not well printed, the text is readable and lively. Many climbers will identify with Harvard and Thompson, their attitude toward climbing and expeditions, and thoroughly enjoy *Mountain of Storms*.

ROBERT H. BATES

*The Ultimate Challenge: The Hardest Way up the Highest Mountain in the World*, by Christian Bonington. New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1973. 352 pages, 24 color plates, 31 black-and-white plates, 6 line drawings, 1 pull-out map. \$12.50.

Some climbers take Mount Everest very seriously and rightly so. The British pioneered, climbed, measured, lavished a treasure, and knighted men for reaching the summit. Most of all they wrote and read about it.

Chris Bonington has written an expeditionary book that may enrage the young turks of the climbing world, and at the same time engage the older generation in the possibilities of smaller expeditions to Everest. This last was illegally demonstrated by an American, Woodrow Wilson Sayre, with a four-man climbing party in 1963. Bonington sounds a bit wistful about Sayre's attempt when he comments, "But I wonder. There are quite a few mountaineers to-day who are beginning to feel that this type of expedition is true mountaineering . . . there is a certain appeal in the thought of man, unaided, reaching the summit of Everest." Here lies the dichotomy of Bonington's philosophy, "idealism and materialism."

Bonington uses all the standard multi-media devices to write his story. He gives short but tantalizing glimpses of the Japanese expedition (whose leader was seventy years of age) which failed in 1969-70. His account of Dyhrenfurth's International Expedition of 1971, gives little-known (to the less voracious reader) information about the actual conception of this expedition by John Amatt and Leif Patterson. His summary of the European Everest Expedition in the spring of 1972, gives scary insights into the notorious Dr. Herrligkoffer. This section tries to give both sides of the story by using the writings of Doug Scott and Felix Kuen. Scott's prose shines like a beacon, as indeed it does throughout the entire book, including his writing in the appendix.

Bonington freely admits "The first I had heard the Southwest Face of Everest mentioned as a possible objective was in the summer of 1965. I was climbing with John Harlin, the American climber . . . (who) also talked of the Southwest Face of Everest, dreaming of an International Expedition."

Bonington displays his idealism by giving credit, not only to John Harlin (a man much misunderstood, especially in his own country), but to all concerned with this expedition.