

with well-distilled experience. I learned a lot. It's a pleasure to have a manual to recommend when everything else is out of date.

DOUG ROBINSON

Advanced Rockcraft, by Royal Robbins. Glendale, California: La Siesta, 1973. 96 pp. 26 photos, profuse sketches.

This important book on rock climbing technique appeared more than two years ago. Blame for failure of this journal to review it promptly must rest squarely on the book review editor: me! The two-year wait is not entirely bad, however. It allows us to view the book in a much better perspective. Subtle strengths and faults are not always apparent to a reviewer who receives a pre-publication copy and writes about it from a single, usually hasty reading.

Advanced Rockcraft is the best climbing technique book to appear in the English language. This is partly due to the author's wide knowledge of his subject, partly due to his hard work, and partly due to the structure of the book. It deals with a tight subject in a loose manner. In all too many informative books, editors without first-hand knowledge of the subject try to drape the author's material onto a framework that doesn't quite fit. Square facts are bludgeoned to fit round holes. To its credit, this book has not been tightly edited. The author's gut feelings come through in descriptions of equipment and technique. Photos are not always related to text material, but the frequent, instantly readable sketches by Sheridan cover the subject so well that photos need only be window dressing.

Other reviewers have taken the author to task because his own actions have not always been what he suggests to others. The alternative is to lower ideals because they haven't been attained in the past. That Robbins has used or removed more bolts than he thinks correct in hindsight is not something that needs to be dealt with in an instructional book. For instance, in this bicentennial year we should remember that Jefferson often tried to short cut the very democratic processes he helped to create, but we must be thankful that he didn't feel compelled to water down the Declaration of Independence because he couldn't live up to every word himself. In fact, Robbins handles the chapter on values exceptionally well, refining a few of the unqualified statements he made in *Basic Rockcraft*. The instructions he gives would-be climbers are a careful balance of some social order with enough individual freedom. This is a critical crossroads where most previous books have taken a wrong turn which points the reader, distantly but inevitably, toward the dead-ends of safety fetishism, regimentation, and reliance on equipment instead of self.

Robbins' chapter on "Leading" has absolutely nothing in common

with the chapter on "Leadership" in *Freedom of the Hills*. The former deals with the individual gaining self-reliance and the latter discusses how the head person should behave in a group situation. Here, once again, the tight subject of "Rockcraft" gives a helping hand. Leadership on technical rock means the ability to walk the tight rope of one's limits, a combination of skill, self-confidence and self-awareness. Leadership on non-technical mountain outings with large groups usually means following the same guidelines as a den mother.

The most important parts of the book are carefully thought-out comments on each technique and piece of equipment. These are wholly trustworthy and well rounded with caution. Every climber, no matter how experienced, stands to gain something by reading them.

The book's main shortcomings are all peripheral to the text. The index must have been written before the book was complete, since many page numbers are in error, usually by only one digit. The photos are abstruse, showing some of the author's personal world, but not relating to the text, such as a group of climbers posed near a tree captioned only as "The Great Southern Sierra Hinterlands Expedition, 1973." The book ends with a creatively written account of one of the author's climbs, in this case an exception to the adage that a photo is worth a thousand words. The short essay outweighs the value of many photos, focusing the various threads of the book into a final, experiential context.

If you are a serious climber, you must read this book. It comes closer to capturing the soul of rock climbing than any other instructional book available.

GALEN A. ROWELL

The Field Book of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing, by Tom Lyman and Bill Riviere. New York: Winchester Press, 1975. 208 pages, with photos and illustrations. Price: \$8.95.

Tom Lyman, an active experienced mountaineer, collaborated with outdoor writer Bill Riviere to produce *The Field Book of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing*. Alas, this is just another instructional manual on mountain travel, equipment, clothing, techniques, and hazards, with appendices on maps and aerial photographs, and a mountain medicine bibliography.

I am sceptical when an author refers to his work as *The field book* to techniques and equipment. And in this case the book is not complete. It is always hard to move from illustration and description to execution; a beginner will find gaps in the description which make this doubly difficult. Illustrations such as the one on page 109 showing a belayer with a single nut for protection are misleading and dangerous. Lyman describes the placement of ice screws in one way and illustrates it in