

The authors' twin biases, towards Boulder and towards already famous climbers, come together in the final chapter: a long interview with the two most famous Boulder climbers, Jim Erickson and Steve Wunsch. Some readers will find this interesting document, almost entirely a discussion of ideas, quite opaque. However, Wunsch and Erickson are original and intelligent climbers whose contributions may consist as much in ideas as in climbs.

Buy *Climb!* for the pictures, take the text with a few grains of salt. Despite its shortcomings it is one of the best books on American climbing to date.

LAWRENCE HAMILTON

The Mountains of Canada, by Randy Morse. Hurtig Publishers—Edmonton, Alberta; Mountaineers, Seattle, 1979. 105 color photographs. Price \$29.95.

This is the first quality-format overview which I have seen on the awe-inspiring mountains of Canada, and it is interesting to note this overdue production was written and published in that nation. After I had enthusiastically skimmed through the full-color photographs, printed on heavy-gloss enamel, and with true color-balance reproduction, the first words that struck me were those by Andy Russell. In the introduction he observed that "Mountains have always been something of a paradox to man." How true, for the earth's high points have long been invested with mystic powers from early man to today's cults which believe in extra-terrestrial beings living within Mount Shasta. But the glittering mountains of Canada, as Thorington portrayed them, largely escaped the fear and dislike of medieval Europe (although they have not totally escaped the callous devastation of the timber companies and dam engineers). The vast array of northern ranges did not need the enlightenment of Rousseau, for they had the Canadian Pacific Railroad to advertise their glories. Indeed, as the introduction states, these mountains are a very special heritage—a national treasure for hikers, climbers, and nature worshippers from all portions of the world. Without question the multiplicity of ranges from Baffin Island to the Coast Mountains bordering the Pacific Ocean presents a magnificent tribute to the geological and ecological processes of Earth.

From the fjords of Baffin to those of the western coastline, the vast geologic exhibits, the magnificent waterways that divide the principal ranges, the great coniferous and boreal forests, the alplands and icefields, are beautifully illustrated in this heavy, handsome book. It will certainly beautify any living room coffee table—for which it is meant. Because the radiance of this publication is the color, it would have enhanced the propriety to give more credit to the various talented photographers, and

perhaps summarize their background and perspectives. While the selection of pictures includes many of Canada's most noted mountains, the choices are made from certain availability, and the very title suggests an overview which should include Mount Waddington and other Coastal Range summits.

The text has some appropriate historical comment related to early mountaineering and here I found the material on Robson, Alberta, Columbia, and Victoria well-selected, and the interjection of Frank Smythe and his ethics proved a thoughtful commentary. Morse gives a well-done earthy description of Conrad Kain's great Bugaboo Spire ascent, an epic exploratory climb done with nearly primitive equipment in a situation where there was no reversing of moves once on the slab. The best essay is that on Assiniboine, a peak which has become synonymous with Canada. The author points out that from a distance Assiniboine exudes an elegance, a cleanness of line and symmetry of form rivalled by few other mountains in the world. At close quarters, however, the shape, form, and character change dramatically: the impression of firmness gives way to the crumbling reality of sedimentary rock. "Elegant lines disappear, dwarfed or blocked out by bands and bulges of friable stone interlaced with veins of snow and ice." Yet, the knowledge that one is climbing Assiniboine makes unpleasanties easier to accept. A dermatologist might get this same reaction examining the pimples on a beautiful lady's face or buttocks.

The balance of written matter and imagery is good, and a mark of thoughtful book design. However, I found the succession of non-related quotations from historical and literary luminaries such as Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, Churchill, Stanley, Mark Twain, and Schiller out of context. And the tragic Toni Kurz episode is totally gross here—in a book praising the glories of mountain ranges on another continent. What detracts from the text is an occasional historical imbalance and a sufficient inclusion of errors that lend a question to the thoroughness of research. The omission of the biggest routes on Mount Temple is curious when the praise of adventure is restricted to earlier routes. The text stands correction in regard to Russell in 1891 being the first to reach Mount St. Elias. Both the 1886 Schwatka and the 1888 Topham expeditions preceded the gallant professor on this gigantic mountain, and it was on Russell's second expedition that he reached so high and proved out the route for the Duke of Abruzzi.

The first ascent of King Peak was not as late as 1972. There are directional errors in Robson and Assiniboine captions. Neither Kor nor Cooper is best known for his Yosemite climbs. I cannot vouch for Jack Arnold's origin, but he was considered an American (first ascent of Lost Arrow), not a Canadian. A bit more care during a revision would correct a few spelling errors (Hermann Ulrichs, Walter Willcox, Jock

Glidden); for a \$30 purchase one should not need to speculate on the full names of such alpinists as E. Cromwell, E. Grassman, and J. Jones.

My recommendation is definitely to purchase the book as an artistic tribute to some of the most compelling alpine creations on this planet.

FRED BECKEY

Mountain Climbing for Beginners, by Mike Banks. Edited for American readers by Andy Kauffmann, Stein and Day, 1978. Softback. 96 pages, 37 line drawings. Price \$3.95.

Here is a gem of a little book, the kind of climbing manual Americans have always wanted but never have quite been able to get. There are many books available on climbing techniques, but nowhere in English does there exist anything as basic, terse and at the same time complete as this American version of English climber Mike Banks' *Mountain Climbing for Beginners*.

The title is something of a misnomer. True, the text is intended primarily for novices, but it also provides a basic refresher course for those of us who have been too long away from the mountains and are preparing to return. Even better, the subject matter is presented in a simple, superb expository style rarely found except among the best professional writers. Not a word is wasted, yet nothing important is omitted. Clearly, Mr. Banks is not just a first-class mountaineer: he is a splendid writer as well.

The book, which has been edited for American readers, begins with as good a rationale as any as to why people are attracted to mountains. It takes the reader progressively through the stages of hill walking, rock-climbing equipment, rope work, rock techniques and thence to direct aid, snow and ice, and survival and rescue. There is a comprehensive though necessarily incomplete appendix by the American editor on where to climb in the United States and Canada, together with the names, addresses and telephone number of principal climbing organizations which can supply interested persons with more detailed local and regional information. The appendix also points to possible shortcomings in American professional services which leave the reader wondering whether corrective measures, when they come, will be the work of national climbing organizations or State and Federal authorities.

The section on hill walking is the best one known to this reviewer and contains a lucid description of map reading. The book's emphasis, however, is on rock climbing which, of course, is the sport's principal form in both the United States and Britain. But, as he proceeds, the author betrays his personal preference for ice and snow, mixed climbing and exploratory adventure. He is careful, however, to discipline his bias to serve his readers' needs.